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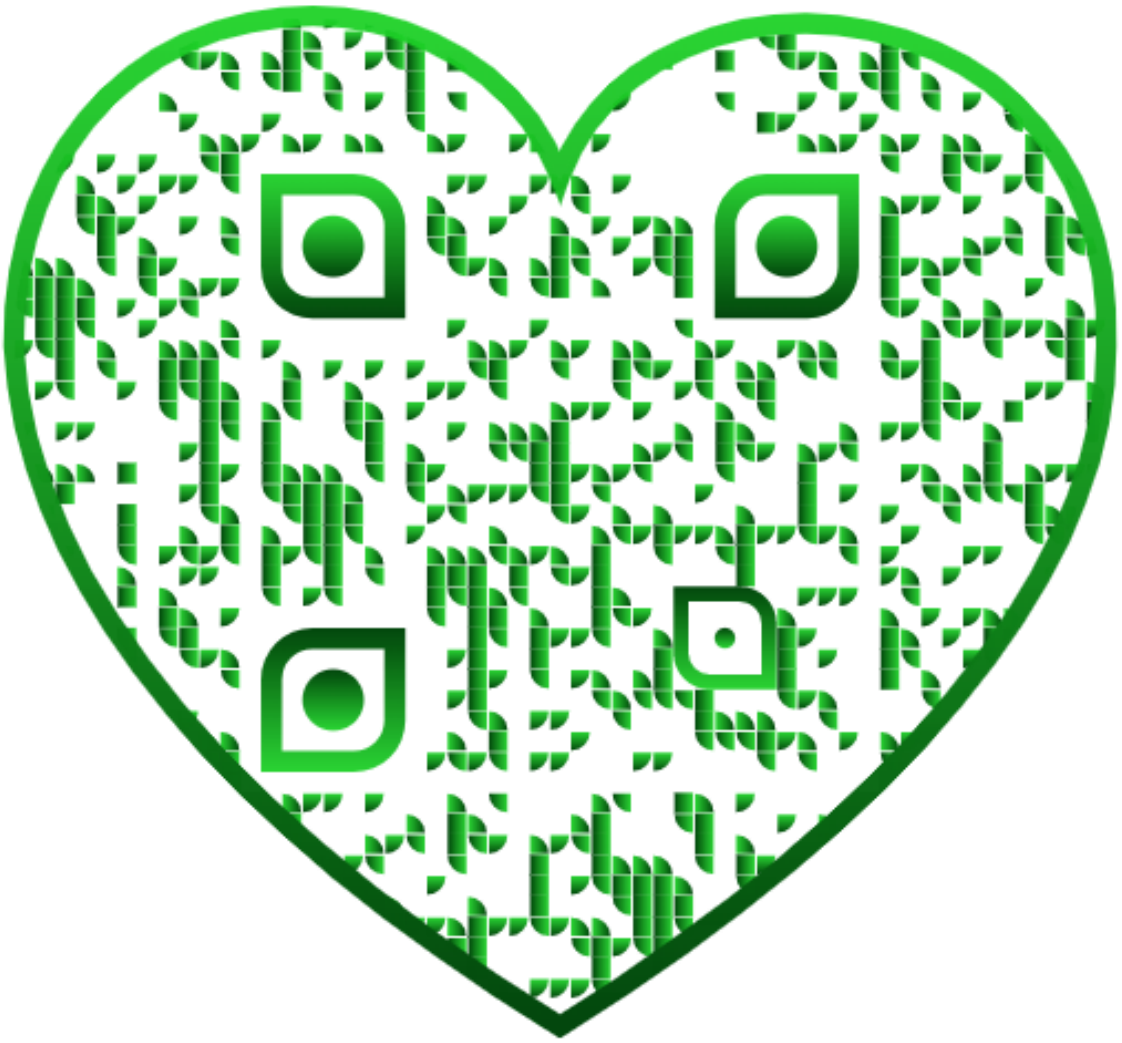

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UN at 80: Beyond Commitments

This year, the world observes the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. Born from the Allied victory in World War II, the UN was founded on its Charter to build a new international order dedicated to peace and cooperation. Over the past eight decades, it has become the world's most universal, representative and authoritative intergovernmental organization, playing a central role in global governance.

As a founding member, China has been an active participant in this endeavor. The nation has worked to advance human wellbeing and has made many contributions in areas essential to our shared future, including global governance, sustainable development, climate action and poverty reduction.

At the UN, China champions fairness, justice and the legitimate rights of developing countries. Through initiatives including the vision of a community with a shared future for humanity, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilizations Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative, China has shared its development experiences as global public goods.

The inclusion of the vision of a community with a shared future for humanity in UN General Assembly resolutions for eight consecutive years marks a pivotal leap, transforming "China's proposition" into "international consensus" and embedding it systematically into the core of global governance.

As the second largest contributor to the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets and the top provider of peacekeeping personnel among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, China delivers substantial practical support. Its commitment is further demonstrated through decisive global actions: Achieving the UN's poverty reduction target a decade ahead of schedule in 2020, a milestone that accelerated progress worldwide, and driving the green transition with ambitious carbon goals and leadership in clean energy.

These contributions have infused the UN with renewed vitality and strengthened its capacity to address global challenges.

Today's new challenges, from geopolitical conflicts to climate change and AI governance, are straining the multilateral system. We must uphold the international order with the UN at its core, grounded in the principles of the UN Charter. We look to this international body to harness the lessons of the past, usher in a new era of multilateralism and advance a vision of global governance that is truly fair and equitable. **BR**

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XINHUA

THE 2026-30 DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) convened its fourth plenary session in Beijing from October 20 to 23.

Participants at the session deliberated over and adopted the Recommendations of the CPC Central Committee for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for Economic and Social Development, according to a communique of the session released on October 23.

The participants heard and discussed a report presented by President Xi Jinping on the work of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee .

The CPC Central Committee set the following major objectives for the 15th Five-Year Plan period: significant advancements in high-quality development; substantial improvements in scientific and technological self-reliance and strength; fresh breakthroughs in further deepening reform comprehensively; notable cultural and ethical progress across society; further improvements in quality of life; major new strides in advancing the Beautiful China Initiative; and further advances in strengthening the national security shield.

XINHUA

Extra for the Expo

Helicopters of the Fenglei aerobatic team of the Chinese People's Liberation Army perform during the seventh China Helicopter Exposition in Tianjin Municipality on October 18. The exposition was held from October 16 to 19, featuring an expanded low-altitude economy exhibition area and debuting multiple military helicopters, civilian helicopters and other low-altitude aircraft.

National Wetlands

China recently added 22 wetlands to its list of wetlands of national importance, bringing the total number to 80, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA), Xinhua News Agency reported on October 20.

The new additions reflect China's continued commitment to strengthening wetland conservation in recent years, including the implementation of its first specialized law on wetland protection, a milestone in its ecological protection efforts.

To date, China is home to 82 wetlands recognized as internationally important and 22 international wetland cities. Meanwhile, the country has added or restored more than 1 million hectares of wetlands nationwide.

Looking ahead, the NFGA said it will further promote wetland restoration and monitoring efforts to enhance the quality and stability of wetland ecosystems.

Generative AI Users

China had 515 million generative AI users as of June, with the user base doubling within six months, according to a report released at the 2025 China Internet Infrastructure Resources Conference in Beijing on October 18.

This figure was up by 266 million from the December 2024 figure, elevating the user penetration rate to 36.5 percent in China, said the report, released by the China Internet Network Information Center.

The report noted that Chinese-made generative AI models have gained broad popularity among users in China, and generative AI has been widely applied in areas including intelligent search, content creation, office assistance and smart devices.

Its usefulness is also being actively explored in sectors including agricultural production, industrial manufacturing and scientific research, the report said.

Information Protection

Chinese authorities have issued regulations to improve management of the outbound transfer of personal information, in a move to promote efficient and safe cross-border flow of personal information, Xinhua reported on October 18.

The document was jointly issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the State Administration for Market Regulation.

These regulations require related entities to fulfill obligations, including notifying individuals, obtaining their separate consent and conducting a personal information protection assessment, before applying for certification to transfer personal information abroad.

It also specifies details including the certification application process, certificate validity period, obligations of professional certification bodies and related supervision requirements.

The regulations will take effect on January 1, 2026.

Best Tourism Villages

Four Chinese villages were listed in United Nations Tourism's 2025 edition of Best Tourism Villages, according to announcements made at a UN Tourism awards ceremony in Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, on October 17.

The four listed villages are Huanggang in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou Province; Jikayi in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province; Dongluo in Taizhou City in Jiangsu Province; and Digang in Huzhou City in Zhejiang.

With these four villages, China now boasts 19 Best Tourism Villages as recognized by the UN Tourism, with 15 other Chinese villages listed over previous years.

According to a Ministry of Culture and Tourism official in charge of application work for the award, the four newly selected villages reflect the comprehensive, diversified development of China's rural tourism sector. UN Tourism's continuous recognition of China's rural destinations attests to the exemplary work of the country's rural tourism industry, and to global acclaim for the drastic changes taking place in rural China.

The four newly listed villages excel in terms of both ecological environment and cultural heritage. Huanggang, for example, boasts an 85-percent forest coverage rate and an 800-year

history of Dong ethnic group culture. Jikayi, which is situated on a plateau, is celebrated for its biodiversity and multiethnic heritage that includes the Tibetan, Qiang and Yi ethnic groups.

Dongluo has not only maintained the beauty of its waterways, but is also preserving its original layout from the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), as well as ancient agricultural skills. Digang, with a history of some 2,500 years, is well-known for its picturesque landscapes and cultural heritage.

New IP Protection Center

China is set to expand its network of intellectual property (IP) protection centers with the approval of a new national-level center in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), the country's top IP regulator, said on October 21.

The new center will facilitate rapid and coordinated IP protection work to innovators in the industries of intelligent terminal and new materials.

According to the CNIPA, the new institution has brought the total number of national-level IP protection centers across the country to 81, including seven in Guangdong.

These centers have been established in key locations across the southern province, including the provincial capital of Guangzhou and the innovation hub of Shenzhen.

As a manufacturing powerhouse, Dongguan, a city with a permanent population of over 10 million, boasts a regional GDP exceeding 1 trillion yuan ($141 billion) and a dynamic innovation ecosystem.

Once completed, the Dongguan center will function as a "one-stop" platform to aggregate resources of IP protection services, promoting the integration of the innovation chain with the industrial chain, the CNIPA said in a press release.

The CNIPA said it will also strengthen coordination among all protection centers in the province, building a regional IP protection hub that fuels high-quality growth across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Migratory Birds

Guangdong is bracing for an influx of more than 300,000 migratory birds during the autumn and winter migration peak, according to the provincial forestry administration, Xinhua reported on October 21.

The birds are set to arrive in coastal mudflats, inland wetlands and coastal nature reserves across the region, highlighting Guangdong's critical role in global bird migration routes, the administration said.

The migration season began in August as temperatures dropped in north China, with Guangdong serving as a key stopover on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

The peak period for birds passing through the province occurs from September to November, according to Zhang Qiang, Deputy Director of the Institute of Zoology, Guangdong Academy of Sciences.

Guangdong boasts a coastline of 4,114 km, the longest in China, alongside vast red mangrove forests. These areas provide abundant food resources, supporting a diverse range of bird species.

XINHUA

Serving Up Ceramics

Tableware on display at the 2025 China Jingdezhen International Ceramic Expo in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, on October 17. The expo ran from October 18 to 22 in Jingdezhen, known as China's "porcelain capital," attracting more than 1,000 buyers from China and abroad.

XINHUA

Popular *Euphratica*

Desert poplar *(Populus euphratica)* forests in Lop County, Hotan Prefecture in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on October 19. Desert poplar forests in Hotan entered their best viewing period around mid-October, presenting breathtaking autumn scenery.

VR Strength

By the end of 2024, China had more than 10,000 companies operating in the virtual reality (VR) sector, according to the 2025 World Conference on the VR Industry, which concluded on October 20 in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province.

Xie Shaofeng, chief engineer of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said the country's VR sector has established a self-reliant industrial system, a diversified and integrated application ecosystem, and a relatively complete industrial ecology.

Positive results have been achieved in breakthrough core technologies, standards development and technological integration, Xie added.

In recent years, China has formulated over 30 national standards and led the creation of nearly 10 international standards in key fields such as virtual digital humans and VR terminal equipment, which have helped guide and ensure the industry's standardized development.

Railway Passenger Trips

China's railway network saw a surge in passenger trips in the first three quarters of this year, with 3.54 billion passenger trips made, up 6 percent year on year, according to China State Railway Group Co. Ltd. (China Railway), the country's railway operator.

This figure is a record high for the same period in the history of recorded passenger trips, said the group, adding that railway transportation remained safe, stable and orderly.

The railway operator made full use of newly operational railway lines and stations to increase transport capacity and made flexible adjustments to train operation plans in the first three quarters. An average of 11,087 passenger trains were operating daily during the period, up 7.1 percent year on year, the company said.

Cross-border passenger transport also gained momentum, with the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the China-Laos Railway handling 23.31 million and 197,000 cross-border passenger trips, respectively, during the nine-month period. This effectively facilitated personnel exchange, as well as trade and business activities.

Smart Port Construction

China has built 60 automated container terminals, continuing to lead the world in smart port construction, Gao Haiyun, an official from the water transport bureau under the Ministry of Transport, said on October 17.

In addition to the scaled development of automated container terminals, the construction of smart waterways is also accelerating. China's national electronic waterway chart covers a total length of over 10,000 km.

In the first eight months of 2025, China's waterway freight volume reached 6.56 billion tons, a year-on-year increase of 3.8 percent. Its port cargo throughput hit 12 billion tons in this period—up 4.4 percent year on year, while container throughput totaled about 230 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), a 6.3-percent increase year on year. TEU is the standard measure of container capacity on a ship, based on the size of a 20-foot-long container.

Duty-Free Goods

The southern Chinese island province of Hainan will broaden the scope of its offshore duty-free goods by adding two new goods categories: pet supplies and portable musical instruments.

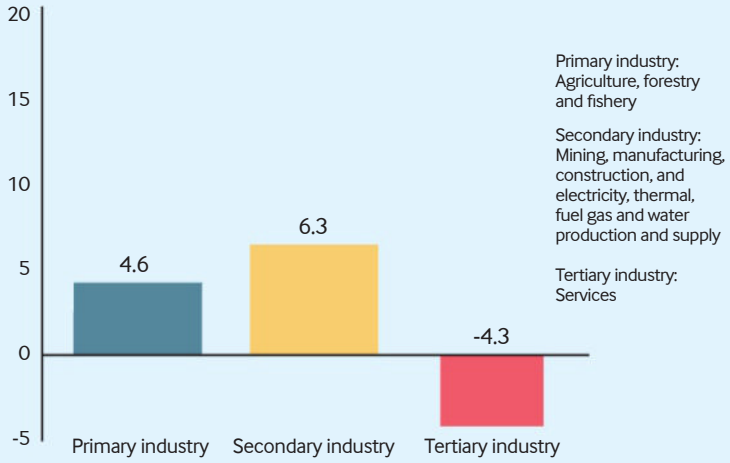
According to an announcement by the Ministry of Finance on October 17, other adjustments to the categories are also going to be made by regrouping or adding products.

These products will include sweeping robots, vacuum cleaners, digital photography and video equipment and ac-

NUMBERS

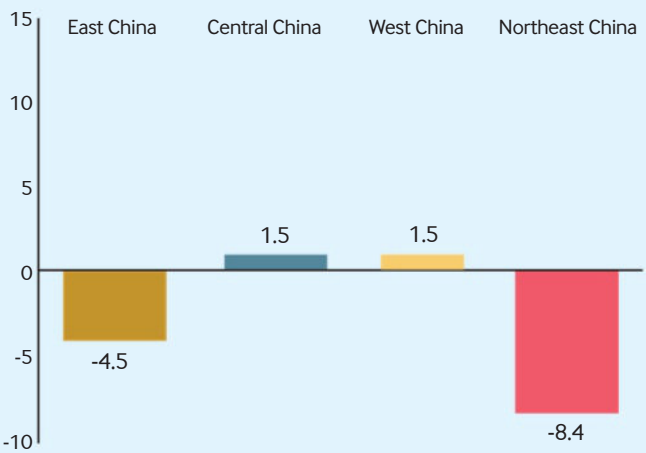
Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Sector

January-September (% y.o.y.)



Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Region

January-September (% y.o.y.)



cessories, mini drones, as well as computer mice and keyboards.

After this adjustment, to take effect on November 1, the island's offshore duty-free shopping list will cover 47 goods categories. The announcement further specified that the minimum age of those qualifying for the benefits of this policy will be adjusted from 16 to 18.

Currently, travelers visiting the island can enjoy a duty-free shopping quota of 100,000 yuan ($14,095) per person each year.

The province has reported strong offshore duty-free sales over the past five years since raising its annual tax-free shopping quota from 30,000 yuan ($4,214) to 100,000 yuan per person on July 1, 2020.

Sales and the number of shoppers saw growth of 315.3 percent and 123.3 percent, respectively, compared with the five years prior to the major shopping quota increase in 2020, local customs data revealed in July.

Innovation Investment

Data released by the State Taxation Administration on October 17 showed that Chinese enterprises have steadily increased their investment in innovation, while the development of new quality productive forces accelerated in the first three quarters of 2025.

New quality productive forces refer to the shift toward innovation-driven growth, technological advancement and high-quality development in multiple sectors of the Chinese economy.

The latest value-added tax (VAT) invoice data showed that sales revenue for intellectual property (IP)-intensive industries grew by 11.5 percent year on year in the first three quarters.

During the period, sales revenue for the hi-tech and equipment manufacturing industries rose by 15.2 percent and 9 percent year on year, respectively, according to the data.

With China accelerating its AI Plus initiative, sales revenue for integrated circuit manufacturing, robot manufacturing and drone manufacturing increased by 17 percent, 21.7 percent and 69.8 percent year on year, respectively.

As a fundamental force in fostering new quality productive forces, the "little giant" enterprises—a title for outstanding specialized, hi-tech small and medium-sized firms—demonstrated robust growth during the period.

In the first three quarters, VAT invoice data showed that sales revenue of "little giant" enterprises rose by 8.2 percent year on year, up 4.1 percentage points from the same period in 2024.

Market Access

The General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) on October 15 granted market access to 15 categories of food products from 10 countries, including South Africa and Belarus, paving the way for more food products from Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) partner countries to reach Chinese dining tables more swiftly.

The BRI is a China-proposed initiative that aims to boosts connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

The move was announced at a conference on the import and export food safety cooperation mechanism for BRI partners held in Shanghai. The mechanism was established in 2023.

In recent years, the food trade has become a new highlight in China's trade with these countries. In the first three quarters of this year, China's food trade with them reached 915.24 billion yuan ($129 billion), up 2.5 percent year on year.

"Thanks to the green channels for fresh and perishable goods, Thai durians can now reach Chinese markets within just 13 hours, while Chinese cold-water salmon can arrive in the Indonesian market in 39 hours," Sun Meijun, head of the GACC, said at the conference.

Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China

(% y.o.y.)

(Source: *National Bureau of Statistics*)

XINHUA

UNITED STATES

Protestors march with signs during a "No Kings" rally in San Francisco, California, on October 18. Millions of people took to the streets across 2,700 cities and towns for the second round of the nationwide protests, which came as the federal government shutdown entered its 18th day, with no resolution in sight at the time of writing

PERU

Security personnel patrol the La Cultura metro station in Lima on October 22. A day earlier, President José Jerí declared a 30-day state of emergency for capital city and the neighboring Callao region to tackle worsening public security

XINHUA

XINHUA

BANGLADESH

Firefighters work near the site of a massive fire in the cargo area of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on October 18. The fire forced a temporary suspension of flight operations, with the airport resuming operation later that day

UGANDA

The aftermath of a head-on collision along the Kampala-Gulu Highway in the district of Kiryandongo on October 22. The crash involved four vehicles and killed 43 people

XINHUA

XINHUA

MEXICO

Performers in colorful costumes at the Monumental Alebrijes Parade 2025 in Mexico City on October 18. The parade celebrates traditional Mexican arts and crafts

XINHUA

JAPAN

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (front, center) poses for a photo with members of her cabinet at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on October 21. The leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party is also the country's first female leader

PHYSICIST CHEN NING YANG DIES AT 103

Chen Ning Yang, a Nobel laureate and member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, died in Beijing on October 18 at the age of 103, according to Tsinghua University.

An obituary from Tsinghua University said Yang had achieved numerous breakthroughs in particle physics, quantum field theory, statistical physics and condensed matter physics, "profoundly shaping the development of these disciplines."

Yang was born in Hefei, Anhui Province, in 1922. In the 1940s, he went to the United States to pursue academic studies and subsequently held teaching positions there. He shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with Tsung-Dao Lee for their work on the so-called parity laws in 1957.

The Yang-Mills gauge theory, introduced by Yang and Robert Mills, is one of the 20th century's most important achievements in physics.

For more than 20 years after his return to China, Yang taught at Beijing-based Tsinghua University, making important contributions to cultivating and recruiting talent and promoting international academic exchange.

Remixing Reality Requires Restrictions

Global Times
October 23

From revived historical figures to reimagined pop icons, the boom in AI-generated content has sparked a global debate over the issues of authorship and copyright infringement. The dispute escalated recently when the Motion Picture Association of America publicly urged OpenAI to curb alleged infringements by Sora 2, the company's latest video-generation model.

Used wisely, such tools can greatly expand creative freedom and breathe new life into cultural traditions.

But the technology can just as readily be misused—from reviving the deceased against the will of their families to enabling deepfake scams. These tools can, in the wrong hands, blur the boundary between tribute and violation, raising troubling questions about consent, privacy and personality rights in the age of synthetic media.

Building a healthy online environment will require more than individual lawsuits. Platforms must strengthen oversight and reward originality, while authorities should set up legal frameworks that safeguard both innovation and artistic integrity.

The Lush Lands of Lin'an

Oriental Outlook
October 10

This September, Lin'an, Zhejiang Province, hosted the 37th Meeting of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme International Coordinating Council. The choice of Lin'an is fitting: Over the past decades, the district has come to embody how China's ancient wisdom of living in harmony with nature can evolve into a modern model of sustainable development.

"The International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) values real actions. It will fully leverage the unique strength of mediation, such as flexibility, cost-effectiveness, accessibility and efficiency, and support the peaceful settlement of international disputes in a more sustainable way."

Hua Chunying, Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairperson of the IOMed Governing Council, at the organization's inauguration ceremony in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on October 20

"In the face of these unprecedented changes and challenges, peoples were asking the fundamental question of our time: What kind of world should we live in, and how do we build it? China has provided its answer: a community with a shared future for humanity."

Sheradil Baktygulov, Director of the Institute of World Politics of Kyrgyzstan, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

Over centuries, Lin'an's mountains and waterways, nestled in the western hills of Hangzhou, Zhejiang's capital, have nurtured a worldview that values a balance between people and land, as well as between economic prosperity and ecological protection.

An example of how this ancient wisdom has been carried into the modern era is a local peak named Tianmu. The mountain has been under state protection since 1956, when it became one of China's first forest areas closed to logging.

Now a national forest and wildlife reserve, its forest coverage has reached 97.56 percent, while recorded wildlife species have grown by more than half in the past two decades. Delegates to the UNESCO meeting had the opportunity to visit Mount Tianmu to view the results of these protection efforts.

Preserving nature is only half the story; local authorities have also worked to ensure that the district's ecological wealth translates into economic growth. The region pioneered a scenic-village model, which transforms villages into destinations for leisure and cultural tourism. To date, 43 local villages have generated 1.13 billion yuan ($158 million) in tourism revenue.

Breaking the Cap of 35

Economic Daily

October 16

For the first time in three decades, China has lifted the maximum hiring age for national civil service applicants, increasing the limit from 35 to 38, and to 43 for those with postgraduate degrees. The reform was announced just days before registration for the 2026 civil service exam.

The 35-year-old age limit was first introduced in 1994, when the country began recruiting civil servants nationwide. It aligned with the country's then focus on attracting a younger generation of professionals, but over time it has hardened into a norm across both public and private sectors, reinforcing age discrimination in the job market.

By loosening age restrictions, this year's national civil service exam is setting a precedent that may prompt employers across China to rethink their hiring criteria. The reform also seeks to ease broader social unease among those in their mid-30s, who are often the main breadwinners in their families and a driving force of domestic consumption.

More fundamentally, the move signals a gradual shift in domestic workplace culture from a youth-obsessed mindset toward merit-based inclusion.

FUYAO GLASS FOUNDER STEPS DOWN AS CHAIRMAN

Cao Dewang, one of the founders of Fuyao Glass Industry Group Co. Ltd., the world's largest supplier of automotive glass by market share, has resigned as chairman of the company, the group announced on October 16.

Cao, 79, who also quit the role of legal representative of Fuyao Glass, will remain on as a director of the company and hold the position of director, chairman and legal representative of some of its subsidiaries, according to the announcement. He will also take the title of lifetime honorary chairman.

His son, Cao Hui, who has served as vice chairman of Fuyao Glass since 2015, will take over all the positions Cao Dewang vacated at the company.

Fuyao Glass was founded in Fuzhou, China, in 1987.

Cao is also recognized as a philanthropist, having donated 16 billion yuan ($2.2 billion) across initiatives ranging from education and disaster relief to poverty alleviation and environmental protection.

"Through Turpan, a key hub for cultural exchange, Western culture and religion entered other parts of China."

Lin Lijuan, an associate professor in the Department of History at Peking University, sharing insights into how Syriac Christian texts were translated, circulated locally and potentially spread to Beijing and south China, at the Seventh International Symposium of Turfan Studies in Turpan (sometimes spelled Turfan), Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region from October 18 to 20

"From rescue to protection, from focusing on a single species to preserving biodiversity—we have not only gained a better understanding of Asian elephants but also developed wisdom for living in harmony with nature."

Chen Fei, Director of the Asian Elephant Research Center under the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, in a recent interview with Xinhua, revealing that the wild Asian elephant population in Yunnan Province, their main habitat in China, has grown from 140 in 1976 to more than 300 currently, thanks to stronger environmental and wildlife protection efforts

COVER STORY

FOUNDING PILLAR, FUTURE ARCHITECT

UN's 80-year journey in shaping global order and China's role

By Yang Chenxi

XINHUA

A high-level meeting celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations at the organization's headquarters in New York City, the United States, on September 22. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, calling for joint efforts to strengthen the UN's role in global governance

Eighty years ago, in the shadow of two catastrophic world wars and amid humanity's yearning for peace, the United Nations was born. From the ashes of World War II, nations came together with a shared determination to ensure that such devastation would never be repeated. The UN Charter opened with a solemn promise: "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind."

Over eight decades, that promise has echoed throughout its history. The UN has shaped global efforts to preserve peace, advance sustainable development and defend the rights of every human being. The international body's imprint on the modern world is undeniable, a testament to both humanity's highest ideals and its endless struggles to live up to them.

Safeguarding peace and security

At the heart of the UN's mission sits its most solemn goal: the preservation of international peace and security. From the earliest days of its existence, the UN has sought to prevent conflict, contain violence and foster dialogue.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It can authorize measures not involving armed forces and if those fail, military measures to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The Security Council is the only body that holds the power to authorize UN peacekeeping operations—an innovation that formed a cornerstone of post-war collective security.

In 1948, the Security Council launched its first peacekeeping mission, dispatching military observers to the Middle East to monitor a truce between Israel and its Arab neighbors. So far, 71 peacekeeping operations have been deployed across the globe, with 11 still ongoing today. Blue-helmeted peacekeepers have protected civilians under fire, stabilized fragile transitions and helped nations rebuild from ruin—often at a great cost. Peacekeeping has become not just a tool of diplomacy, but a UN symbol, a living testament to the world's collective commitment to peace.

Beyond peacekeeping, mediation and conflict prevention have stood as pillars of the UN's peace architecture. At the height of the Cold War in 1962, the third UN Secretary General U Thant from Myanmar exemplified this role, and his mediation between the United States and the Soviet Union helped steer the Cuban Missile Crisis from escalating into a nuclear catastrophe.

UN envoys and special representatives have traversed the world, from Cyprus to Afghanistan, from the Balkans to the Middle East, working tirelessly to open channels ▶▶

of dialogue and forge political pathways out of conflict.

The UN's role in arms control and non-proliferation further underscores its place in safeguarding global security. With its support, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (entering into force in 1970) emerged as a foundation for the international nuclear order, seeking to balance deterrence, disarmament and the peaceful use of atomic energy. Likewise, landmark accords, including the Chemical Weapons Convention (entering into force in 1975) and the Biological Weapons Convention (entering into force in 1997), were negotiated and advanced under the UN's aegis.

Together, these treaties form a vital shield for humanity, protecting our collective future from the shadow of mass destruction.

Building a more sustainable world

Promoting shared global development has been one of the UN's most enduring missions. Since the 1960s, the UN launched successive "development decades" and set phased global development goals through the International Development Strategy, steering worldwide development agenda.

That momentum culminated in September 2000, when world leaders gathered at the UN headquarters in New York City for the Millennium Summit, where they adopted the landmark Millennium Declaration. This declaration laid the foundation for the Millennium Development Goals—eight specific targets to reduce extreme poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and gender inequality by 2015.

By the end of that period, substantial progress had been made. The overarching target of halving global extreme poverty was met five years ahead of schedule, hundreds of millions of people were lifted from destitution, and extensive gains were achieved in primary education, child health and access to clean water.

Building on that headway, the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted unanimously by all 193 member states in September 2015, set forth a more comprehensive vision: "Transforming our world." Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide an integrated blueprint for eradicating poverty, promoting equality and protecting the planet, linking economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability in a single framework. The UN's development work has been underpinned by institutions including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which have provided indispensable financing and policy support for developing nations.

Across its specialized agencies, the UN has registered historic achievements in advancing human welfare. The World Food Programme, founded in 1961 and the world's largest humanitarian organization to date, delivers life-saving food assistance to tens of millions of people in crisis each year. The Food and Agriculture Organization has championed agricultural innovation and food security, helping nations overcome chronic hunger.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has long stood at the forefront of global health. Its coordination of the effort that led to the eradication of smallpox in 1980 stands as one of humanity's greatest public health triumphs. Since then, the WHO has been instrumental in coordinating the global response to diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, a role that was particularly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts consistently demonstrate the indispensable value of multilateral cooperation in safeguarding human health.

Meanwhile, the UN Environment Programme has been a driving force in shaping international environmental governance, crafting the treaties and conventions that underpin modern climate diplomacy. From the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement, the UN has guided the world's collective response to climate change, while advancing other fundamental environmental accords such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the first global agreement to cover all aspects of biological diversity.

Defending human dignity

The protection of fundamental human rights has stood as one of the UN's defining missions. In December 1948, the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first global articulation of the basic freedoms and rights inherent to all people. This momentous document laid the foundation for a comprehensive body of international human-rights treaties, inspiring subsequent conventions including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966, as well as treaties addressing racial discrimination, gender equality and the rights of children.

Institutions like the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights oversee compliance, review state reports and provide avenues for individual petitions, forming the backbone of modern international human rights protection.

Through specialized agencies, the UN's work has achieved a truly global reach. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), ratified by 196 states, stands as the most universally endorsed human rights treaty in history. Meanwhile, bodies like UN Women champion gender equality worldwide, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees provides critical protection for tens of millions displaced by conflict and persecution.

Collectively, these instruments and institutions affirm the UN's enduring vision that human rights are universal and indivisible while protecting them is a shared responsibility of all nations.

Upholding multilateralism

Beyond peace, development and human rights, the UN remains the central pillar of the international order and the foremost arena for practicing multilateralism.

In the mid-20th century, as dozens of newly independent nations joined its ranks, UN membership expanded and diversity deepened. On October 25, 1971, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758, restoring all lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the UN. This, alongside the admission of many developing nations, reshaped the organization into a truly universal and representative body, one

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UN Secretary General António Guterres addresses the 80th anniversary celebration of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization via video link in Rome, Italy, on October 16

where member states, large or small, are equal, and where every voice carries weight.

The September 2024 UN Summit on the Future, after extensive negotiations, adopted the landmark Pact for the Future. Addressing five decisive areas—namely, sustainable development and financing, peace and security, science and innovation and digital cooperation, youth and future generations and transforming global governance—the document encompasses 56 action programs designed to break through long-standing stalemates and address emerging challenges.

By placing development at the core and reaffirming the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," previously formalized at the 1992 Rio Summit, the pact sends a clear message: Renewed solidarity, inclusiveness and cooperation remain essential to building a fairer global governance system.

For a better future

In a new era of global instability, the UN's relevance and effectiveness face profound tests.

Deepening geopolitical rivalries have paralyzed the Security Council and stalled action on pivotal peace and security issues. Simultaneously, emerging challenges, from AI and cyberspace to outer space, have exposed the limits of the UN's institutional agility.

The organization's architecture has failed to keep pace with a multipolar world. The majority of member states, representing the developing world, still lack equitable representation, fueling debates over the Security Council's legitimacy and the urgent need for reform. These structural challenges are compounded by chronic funding shortages and arrears.

Ultimately, these difficulties stem from a fundamental issue: Some member states are undermining the multilateral spirit by pursuing unilateral actions and pseudo-multilateralism within the very system designed to ensure collective action.

Eighty years of UN history offer a clear lesson: In an interdependent world, a UN-centered international system is central to global stability and genuine multilateralism—rooted in consultation and cooperation, as well as the surest path to solving shared challenges.

Abandoning this principle weakens the body and jeopardizes the security and welfare of all nations.

China's support for the UN has been steadfast and substantial. As a founding member and permanent Security Council member, China has consistently upheld its authority. It is a top financial contributor, a party to most major international treaties and a country that fields the largest contingent of peacekeepers among the Council's five permanent members. With a record of restraint, having never started a war or occupied any foreign territory, China demonstrates its commitment to global stability and fulfilling its international obligations.

China advances human rights through a people-centered approach, prioritizing the rights to subsistence and development while advocating for a greater Global South voice in human rights governance.

Through extensive development cooperation, it assists other developing nations in pursuing independent and sustainable modernization paths suited to their national conditions.

The UN's future renewal will require China's continued leadership. Initiatives like building a community with a shared future for humanity, the Global Development Initiative, which addresses transnational challenges through multilateral cooperation, and the Belt and Road Initiative, a framework to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, among other global public goods, provide valuable structures for strengthening global governance.

UN Secretary General António Guterres has acknowledged that these efforts align closely with the UN's goals, offering a model for inclusive international cooperation and shared prosperity.

Amid today's uncertainty, China has called for reinforcing, not dismantling, the UN-centered system. China believes that all nations should consolidate the organization's foundations, not tear down its beams and pillars. On UN reform, China supports broad and democratic consultations to make the Security Council more representative and effective, and advocates special arrangements to correct historical injustices.

Upholding true multilateralism and reforming the UN are essential to revitalizing its founding spirit and guiding humanity toward lasting peace, shared security and common prosperity. **BR**

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COVER STORY

INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN

October 24 was the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. In an interview with *Beijing Review* reporter Li Nan on the sidelines of the Beijing Culture Forum on September 23, **Jean-Pierre Raffarin**, former Prime Minister of France and the French Government's special representative for China affairs, shared his insights on how to address global governance challenges. Edited excerpts from their conversation follow:

***Beijing Review*: This year is the 80th anniversary of the UN's founding. How do you think countries should reform and improve the current global governance system? What roles can China and France play in this process?**

Jean-Pierre Raffarin: This is a difficult subject. Today, the world is tense and dangerous. In this context, it is essential that France and China work together to advocate world peace. Both the Chinese and French peoples consider peace a top priority in global governance. The Chinese people have never waged war beyond their own borders. They have only fought when they were attacked on their own land. The Chinese are peace-loving people. The French people, after the horrors and tragedies of World War II, no longer wish to repeat those.

Since 1945, the world has changed dramatically. We can see that some countries, such as the United States, have paralyzed the World Trade Organization to some extent. Yet global trade organizations are indispensable. The rule of law must be strengthened worldwide in a bid for violence and brutality to recede. We also see that today's political discourse is becoming increasingly harsh. A major power like the U.S. is pursuing unilateral tariffs and protectionist policies.

I think it is very important to reach a consensus acknowledging that international institutions are largely paralyzed and that, in particular, the UN Security Council can no longer properly fulfill its responsibility to maintain peace. Multilateralism must be renewed. Also, international organizations must be transformed so that a new, shared multilateralism can make global governance function effectively—especially in maintaining world peace.

We must open the discussion on the future of global governance and the new multilateralism as soon as possible. We need to create new rules. We must restore consultation, dialogue and a spirit of universal respect. To this end, we need an international legal system developed through discussion and negotiation, but also one that adapts to the modern world—one that gives a rightful place to Africa, which the old system did not, and to the Global South, which remains underrepresented today. Every nation should be able to find its rightful place on the world stage.

Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Governance Initiative at the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Plus" Meeting in Tianjin, a port city in north China, on September 1. What's your take on this initiative?

Indeed, I believe that some principles must be respected. President Xi Jinping, by defending these principles, is prompting people's reflection on the new multilateralism.

I notice that, in recent years, both the Chinese and French presidents have been the most active leaders in putting forward proposals for a new world order, with goals all rooted in multilateralism. I think it is very important for France and China to make concerted efforts for the future of the new multilateralism.

However, it is very clear that real progress will only be possible when the global situation becomes calmer. Today, tensions are too severe to foster broad cooperation among all parties. I believe that the top priority now is to resume peace.

We hope that all major powers can take part in the pursuit of peace—peace in Europe, of course, but also peace on other continents affected by war. To realize the visions put forward at major international gatherings, including the SCO meeting, tensions must first be eased; only in a peaceful environment can these prospects take shape and grow stronger.

How do you view China's efforts to improve the system of global governance?

First of all, I would like to commend the achievements of China and the Chinese people in recent years. I first came to China more than 50 years ago. I have seen China build itself up and witnessed the courage of its people, who have built their country into a modern one in a remarkably short time. I want to express to all my Chinese friends my deep respect for China's development, which has helped reduce poverty worldwide.

In this context, China has acquired a new position in international relations. China is contributing to the renewal of global governance with its

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The China Pavilion at the 61st French International Agricultural Fair, held in Paris from February 22 to March 2

traditional values and great civilization. We know very well that in the years to come, China will play a pivotal role in maintaining world balance. That is why its culture of peace is so important to us and why this great civilization deserves respect, just as our own great European civilization must also be respected.

I believe that France and China share this vision of multilateralism, which requires dialogue among peoples and civilizations that respect one another, rather than judge one another. In this sense, China's international role is very important for opening up hopeful prospects for the future.

What influence can the China-France relationship have on China-Europe relations and, more broadly, on global governance?

I have long believed that the core of the Franco-Chinese relationship lies in culture. Our two peoples are open to exchange, open to poetry, to culture and to all forms of art. Culture plays an essential role in our relations. That is why our two countries have a very fertile vision of cultural exchange—because it helps foster mutual understanding between peoples.

However, our different cultures also contain many differences. Philosophers have studied these gaps, and we see that such differences arouse people's curiosity and encourage deeper mutual understanding. I believe that France and China share broad common visions concerning the evolution of the world, the need to protect our planet, as well as values tied to defending humanity and respecting diversity.

France and China have a long-standing and profound relationship based on mutual respect. I think they should strive to be exemplary in improving relations between Europe and China. The Franco-Chinese relationship can serve as a model for the future of Europe-China relations.

Naturally, Europe is a complex world—a cooperative union of states rather than a single country—so negotiations and diversity are inevitable. That is why, in this context, the Franco-Chinese relationship must serve as a model of respect, cooperation and frank dialogue on differences—and, at its core, as a constructive driver for the future of humanity and for the pursuit of peace in a world that has become increasingly perilous. **BR**

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COVER STORY

WHEN THE WORLD FOLLOWS THE GREAT WAY

By Lan Xinzhen

On September 1, President Xi Jinping quoted the line "Uphold the Great Principle, and the world will follow" in his speech at the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus" Meeting in Tianjin, a port city in north China, calling on all parties to uphold courageously the great principle and the common good of the world, promote a correct historical perspective on World War II, resolutely safeguard the fruits of the victory in the war, and bring greater benefits to all through global governance reform and the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

The quote comes from the *Tao Te Ching*, a classic text composed over 2,500 years ago and traditionally credited to the ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi. It teaches that those who understand and abide by the fundamental laws of the universe (The Great Way) win popular support.

This year is the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. At present, the reform of the global governance system has become a pressing concern for the international community.

Eighty years ago, the painful lessons of World War II led to the creation of the UN, opening a new chapter in global governance. Since its establishment, the UN has spearheaded pivotal agreements, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its role

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The venue of the 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Tianjin on August 31-September 1

remains indispensable, from maintaining world peace and security and fostering cooperation and growth to resolving international conflicts and addressing global challenges.

As a founding member of the UN and a permanent member of the Security Council, China has always supported the UN in playing a central role in international affairs and actively participated in all its major undertakings. China is the second largest contributor to the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets, and the largest provider of peacekeepers among the UN Security Council's permanent members. It has also introduced multiple concepts and initiatives that reflect the purposes and principles stated in the UN Charter—including the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilizations Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative, all of which intend to lay a path toward a community with a shared future for humanity.

These proposals have won widespread recognition among UN member states and have contributed Chinese wisdom and strength to facilitating the international body's growth and advancing global governance.

Today, however, regional conflicts, hegemonism and a shift toward de-globalization are threatening to cripple the global governance system, and humanity once again stands at a decisive juncture. China hopes the UN will take on a more active role in courageously upholding the great principle and the common good of the world. In this context, renewing the UN's founding mission and reaffirming the commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter are of great importance.

In an increasingly complex world, the ancient adage "Uphold the Great Principle, and the world will follow" rings truer than ever. Our focus must remain on the foundational aspirations for peaceful coexistence and a steadfast pursuit of mutually beneficial cooperation.

The global community should use the UN's 80th anniversary as an opportunity to further strengthen the UN-centered system and uphold the vision of global governance that features extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit. By coming together to reform and improve the global governance system, we can contribute to building a community with a shared future for humanity and charting a course toward a brighter future of peace, security, prosperity and progress. **BR**

Scan the QR code to watch the video

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COVER STORY

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

By Satoshi Tomisaka

Eight decades ago this year, in the aftermath of two devastating world wars, the international community created the United Nations as a framework for peace and collective governance—a bold experiment in preventing humanity from repeating its worst mistakes.

Eighty years on, that vision has both endured and evolved. The spirit of the UN remains vital, but cracks in the current system have become increasingly evident. Global governance, once anchored in shared responsibility, has drifted toward unilateralism and power politics. The U.S.-dominated model of global leadership has shown its limitations, as policies driven by self-interest rather than balance have destabilized the international order. The world today feels like a finger hovering over a trigger—a moment of dangerous tension in desperate need of reflection.

It is time to reexamine what global governance means. Humanity once built a new international order out of the ruins of war. Now, we must have the courage to build one without war—a post-war governance model for a world that has not yet fallen into massive conflict.

In this crucial moment, only a few actors have the capacity to propose new frameworks for peace and order: the United States, China and the UN. Yet even the UN, over time, has become more of an arena for power struggles than a forum for consensus. Both developed and developing nations now recognize the fatigue within the current system—its institutional rigidity, its diminishing effectiveness, its inability to adapt to today's multipolar realities.

Against this backdrop, the Global Governance Initiative (GGI), proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Plus" Meeting in September, deserves particular attention. In many ways, it echoes earlier historic efforts—such as the signing of the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, which sought to outlaw war itself. China's proposal carries a similar sense of mission: To offer a constructive, inclusive vision for a world order that better reflects the common interests of humanity.

Since 2021, China has successively put forward four major international initiatives: the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilizations Initiative and the GGI. Together, these four frameworks form a coherent set of public goods for the world, reflecting China's commitment to a development-centered approach to peace and cooperation.

The Belt and Road Initiative, which predates them, already embodies this logic by linking nations through shared infrastructure and economic opportunity. It connects countries, weaves their futures together and reminds people that peace is the foundation of all progress.

China's approach does not lecture the world on peace; it demonstrates peace through development. When people experience the tangible benefits of growth, they realize for themselves that peace is indispensable. Human beings have an innate desire for self-fulfillment—and peace is the essential condition for achieving it.

This year is also the 80th anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War. For China and Japan, this is a time to reflect on history, peace and our shared responsibility for the future.

Japan once waged a war of aggression, yet even today, many Japanese find it difficult to confront that past honestly. Although successive governments have formally acknowledged Japan's wartime aggression, such as through then Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's statement on historical issues in 1995, revisionist tendencies persist. Some in Japan take pride in the "pacifist constitution" and Article 9, which renounces war and prohibits the country from maintaining military forces, yet few can clearly explain how peace has been maintained or what institutional safeguards are truly in place to effectively prevent war.

Post-war Japan has often avoided this deeper reflection. The onset of the Cold War diverted attention from the question of how Japan should design a system that prevents future conflict. True reflection is not an act of weakness or self-denial—it is an act of responsibility. It helps a society build stronger institutions and a more secure tomorrow.

For Japan, understanding this truth is key. Admitting one's mistakes is not losing face; it is a prerequisite for moral leadership.

As the world enters a new era of uncertainty, it is time for all nations—especially in Asia—to think beyond the divisions of the past. Global governance is not about dominance or alignment; it is about shared responsibility. **BR**

Human beings have an innate desire for self-fulfillment—and peace is the essential condition for achieving it

The author is a professor of Chinese affairs at Takushoku University in Tokyo
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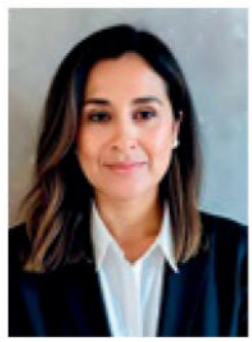
COVER STORY

UNLEASHING 'SHE POWER'

The Global Leaders' Meeting on Women, known as "Beijing +30," was held on October 13-14 to commemorate the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing 30 years ago. Ahead of the meeting, *Beijing Review* interviewed **Karen Martinez**, a strategic planning specialist at the Center for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), part of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In the interview, Martinez shared insights into how UN-China cooperation is advancing sustainable agriculture and empowering rural women across the Asia-Pacific region. Edited excerpts of the interview follow:



***Beijing Review*: Could you elaborate on the cooperation between the CSAM and China in the agricultural sector, and how the two sides work together to promote the development of agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region?**

Karen Martinez: I think it's important to first highlight the role that the CSAM plays as part of the UN. We are a regional institution, part of the ESCAP. And our main role is to improve rural livelihoods, reduce poverty and advance sustainable agricultural mechanization.

The Government of China is one of our key partners in all the activities that we are able to do. Currently, we have a project that is related to straw management. This project tries to reduce straw burning through the use of machinery and to show how farmers can use the straw instead of burning it. The project, launched in 2018 in collaboration with China in Shandong Province, was a complete success. We then moved this project to other countries. Currently, this project is being implemented in Indonesia, the Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Nepal. This is a good example of how South-South cooperation works, and how a successful local story in China is moving to other countries in the region, helping them create the same ripple effect.

Why is it necessary to empower rural women to become innovators and community leaders in sustainable agriculture?

When we design a project, we always make sure to include women as part of it. In China, more than 60 percent of the workforce in agriculture are women. In the Asia-Pacific region, it's a little bit less than 60 percent. Men prefer to migrate to the cities in order to find higher-paying jobs, while women, because they have their families there, need to stay where they are, which reduces the opportunities for them to gain access to formal jobs or access to decision-making and leadership positions. So this is a big weight on women. There are also unpaid responsibilities that women have to take care of.

So they need to find ways to earn an income and agriculture is one way to do it. One thing that we have to consider is that when you provide women with knowledge, resources and technology, you are not only helping them but also helping their communities. There is evidence that shows women, when making decisions, take into account their communities. And they also pay attention to the sustainability effect their project is going to have. For instance, there was a woman who started learning how to manage a drone in order to help all members of her community obtain the same knowledge.

I have the opportunity to see in real life how cooperation like this works, and how these women are working very hard to be part of cooperatives. Now, they are managing cooperatives. They are learning how to use heavy machinery. They are learning how to use new machinery. They are bringing these innovations to their communities and giving the knowledge to other members of their communities, because they understand that when everyone has more income and when everyone shares this income, the entire community, including themselves, is going to be better off.

How do you view China's progress in advancing women's development over the past 30 years?

There is a lot that China has done so far to create new opportunities for women. The government recently released a white paper (titled China's Achievements in Women's Well-Rounded Development in the New Era—*Ed.*), sharing important data regarding women's development in the country over the last 30 years. For instance, it reads that over 50 percent of Chinese Internet entrepreneurs are women. There was 450 billion yuan ($63 billion) invested in microloans that have

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Agricultural workers tend to vegetable seedlings at a greenhouse base in Xiwangzhuang Town, Zaozhuang, Shandong Province, on September 6

helped over 8 million women increase their resources and income. This is quite impressive.

These are examples for other countries. I think they contribute directly to the Sustainable Development Goals (adopted by the UN in 2015—*Ed.*) where women's work and creating gender equity are key factors.

What do you see as the future of women in sustainable agriculture across the Asia-Pacific region?

I think there is still a long way to go regarding working conditions for women. For instance, in agricultural machinery, there is still room to improve how agricultural machinery better fits women's needs—how it could be a little bit lighter, for instance. I think technology and innovation are going to be part of this improvement in the near future. We are working on that, and I think China is also working on that.

We recently organized a forum to discuss leveraging technology to improve women's work in agriculture. We did this with the collaboration of the China mission to ESCAP. This forum brought together different kinds of policymakers and created new partnerships.

The forum was also an opportunity to discuss these issues that exist not only in China but across the region. And also, as part of the CSAM's work with China, I think one of the areas that we want to continue working on is capacity-building for women farmers in China and the region at large. Also, creating other projects that focus on women farmers will be something that we would like to explore in the future. Continuing the work that we have been doing with China, regarding dialogues, partnerships and projects that go beyond China, is also important for us. **BR**

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COVER STORY

REDEFINING GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

By Nilantha Ilangamuwa

The 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Tianjin concluded not with routine communiqués but with a declaration of intent that blended moral clarity with strategic foresight. Its final pronouncements articulated a vision of governance that respects sovereignty, embraces diversity and addresses structural inequities, signaling the urgency of reform in an age marked by proliferating conflict, widening inequality, and resurgent authoritarianism. This vision is embodied in President Xi Jinping's Global Governance Initiative (GGI), a framework designed to ensure that global cooperation is not merely transactional but principled, inclusive and responsive to the aspirations of all nations.

The initiative reflects a profound awareness of the limitations of current international mechanisms. Institutions conceived to mediate conflict and uphold human rights, including the United Nations, increasingly display paralysis, hindered by veto politics, selective enforcement, and a disconnect between global power centers and the needs of the developing world. The insistence on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter is not an appeal to nostalgia but a recognition that, without reform, multilateral frameworks risk obsolescence in the face of contemporary crises. The GGI positions governance as a dynamic, human-centered mechanism capable of integrating power with principle, authority with accountability, and ambition with responsibility.

The necessity of such a framework is accentuated by persistent inequalities that act as catalysts for instability. Structural marginalization, economic exclusion and inequitable access to health, education, and opportunity create reservoirs of disaffection that transcend borders. Poverty, climate-induced displacement and social inequities are not peripheral concerns; they are sources of geopolitical volatility. It is in this context that China's domestic achievements provide instructive lessons. The recently released white paper, China's Achievements in Women's Well-Rounded Development in the New Era, demonstrates the practical impact of inclusive governance. It highlights how empowering women in volunteerism, social services and environmental stewardship contributes directly to societal stability and resilience.

Across China, women have become active participants in governance and community management, serving as mediators, grid managers and environmental custodians. Programs such as the Marriage and Family Disputes Mediation Office in Xilin Gol League, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, have resolved over 10,000 cases with a 95-percent success rate, while volunteer groups led by women, like Wang Lanhua's team in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, provide the necessary social services to children, seniors and vulnerable ethnic communities. Wang is the chief of a volunteer group in Wuzhong City, Ningxia, who considers solving community problems her lifelong mission. In the ecological domain, women have led reforestation, desertification control, river protection and sustainable agriculture initiatives, collectively transforming degraded lands into productive ecosystems. These initiatives illustrate the broader principle that effective governance is inseparable from the inclusion of all social actors, and that the empowerment of marginalized groups produces measurable gains for society as a whole.

China's achievements in women's development are complemented by its innovative approach to global trade and connectivity. The world's first China–Europe Arctic Express, a commercial maritime corridor traversing the Northern Sea Route, was launched in late September. The 4,900-container vessel *Istanbul Bridge*, operated by the Chinese-invested Sea Legend, departed Ningbo–Zhoushan Port, China's Zhejiang Province, for Felixstowe in the United Kingdom, cutting the transit time to just 18 days—less than half the duration of conventional Suez Canal routes. Beyond speed, the route reduces carbon emissions by an estimated 50 percent and bypasses congestion-prone and politically volatile waters. While explorers such as Sir Hugh Willoughby failed in similar endeavors centuries ago, modern planning, logistical coordination, and technological support have enabled the Arctic Express to transform historical ambition into practical achievement. Though not the central focus of the GGI, this initiative exemplifies how foresight, innovation, and multilateral cooperation can overcome longstanding geographic and geopolitical constraints.

The moral and strategic lessons of these domestic and international initiatives reinforce the broader imperatives of the GGI. Inclusive governance, sustainable development and connectivity are mutually reinforcing, each strengthening the other. Women's participation in governance and social services enhances social cohesion and resilience, while innovations in trade and logistics reduce vulnerability to disruption and increase the efficiency of global supply chains. Both illustrate that effective governance must integrate principle with pragmatism, foresight with execution, and human welfare with strategic objectives.

The imperative to reform global governance is nowhere clearer than in the domain of security. Transnational threats, from terrorism to cyber warfare and climate-induced crises, operate beyond the reach of conventional

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The Global Mayors Dialogue – SCO Summit Cities is held within the framework of the Year of Sustainable Development of SCO in Tianjin on July 8

state-centric architectures. The ongoing conflicts across the globe—from Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa to Palestine in the West Asia, and up to Ukraine in Europe—illustrate how failure to address structural anxieties and historical grievances can escalate into protracted crises. In such an environment, Xi's emphasis on governance that places citizens at the center—ensuring that the people of every nation are the actors in and beneficiaries of global governance—is particularly prescient. It signals a pivot from elite, state-dominated frameworks to inclusive structures capable of managing complex, multidimensional challenges.

Connectivity, under the GGI, is not simply a matter of infrastructure but a principle of stability. Trade corridors, energy networks and digital platforms must be constructed as instruments of equitable growth rather than mechanisms of dominance. The Arctic Express, alongside other initiatives, exemplifies this ethos by providing a secure, environmentally conscious, and efficient alternative to traditional maritime routes, while enabling enterprises to navigate global uncertainty. Such projects demonstrate that connectivity, when aligned with governance principles, enhances resilience, reduces risk and fosters trust among states and communities.

Equitable access to opportunity is equally central to the GGI. Without investment in education, healthcare, technology and social services, governance risks becoming an abstract exercise serving elites rather than the broader population. China's domestic programs in women's empowerment, eco-environmental management and volunteer service highlight the transformative potential of human-centered policy. Across thousands of villages and urban communities, women have become catalysts for social cohesion, environmental stewardship and sustainable development, creating a model in which citizens are active participants rather than passive recipients of governance.

These examples collectively illuminate the principles underpinning the GGI that power must be exercised responsibly, that institutions must be accountable and adaptive, and that policies must be evaluated according to their human and environmental impact. Historical failures—from colonial expeditions in the Arctic to governance models that excluded large swathes of the population—highlight the cost of overlooking inclusivity, foresight and principle. China's recent achievements, both in women's development and in pioneering Arctic trade routes, demonstrate that deliberate, knowledge-based, and principled action can translate ambition into measurable success.

The integration of domestic empowerment initiatives with international foresight creates a template for governance that is both normative and operational. The GGI reflects a worldview in which inclusion, sustainability and strategic vision are inseparable. Women's participation strengthens social cohesion and environmental stewardship; innovative trade corridors enhance economic resilience and reduce geopolitical risk; multilateral engagement strengthens legitimacy and reduces systemic inequities. Together, these elements exemplify a model of governance in which the benefits accrue not only to states but to communities, individuals and the global commons.

The stakes could not be higher. Without renewed commitment to reform, inequality will deepen, conflict will proliferate and trust will erode, imperiling global stability. Yet China's domestic and international achievements illustrate the potential of governance guided by principle, evidence and foresight. By embedding human welfare, environmental responsibility and strategic foresight into the architecture of global cooperation, the GGI offers a roadmap for addressing structural vulnerabilities while advancing the collective good.

Where centuries of exploration ended in failure, deliberate planning, technological support and institutional foresight have enabled success. Where social exclusion once constrained progress, targeted empowerment has produced measurable results. These narratives—the Arctic Express and the transformative impact of women's development—serve as illustrations rather than the center of the story; the central theme remains the articulation and operationalization of a governance framework capable of reconciling ambition with equity, strategic foresight with execution and power with principle. **BR**

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COVER STORY

THE GGI: AN ERA FOR STRENGTHENING AFRICA'S GLOBAL PRESENCE

By Hedi Hariz

The Global Governance Initiative (GGI) was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping on September 1. It supports countries of the Global South, including those in Africa, to accelerate their integration into a multipolar, interconnected world order.

The initiative is rooted in a Chinese vision that values civilizational pluralism, aligns closely with the particularities of African societies and supports them to enhance their global role. It encourages political leaders to pursue peaceful coexistence and promotes the resolution of conflicts—consistent with China's vision of fostering global peace.

The initiative will help Africa overcome the colonial legacy and Western economic domination that have long hindered the continent's progress—a continent historically exploited by external powers under a fading unipolar order.

The GGI

The GGI carries seeds of hope and practical solutions inspired by the Chinese model of development. China's achievements in serving the public good have elevated its global standing, enabling it to advocate for economic independence, resist imposed globalization and confront exploitation and bullying.

Xi's proposal signals that the future holds great potential—provided it is matched by the strong will and cooperation among the nations of the Global South on the basis of equality, shared interests and mutual benefit. The initiative also aligns with the ongoing structural transformation of the global economic system.

Africa, with its vast demographic wealth—where youth make up 60 percent of the population—is a key partner in this vision. This new generation has witnessed China's remarkable achievements and views it as a reliable partner through the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which has strengthened development ties and highlighted China's growing role in advancing African economies.

President Xi has often stated that China and Africa are on a new journey to jointly building a community with a shared future, especially amid global instability that demands a solidarity stronger than ever before.

In 2023, Xi reaffirmed that Beijing stands ready to work with the developing world in practicing true multilateralism, increasing the representation and voice of the Global South in global governance and enhancing cooperation on climate change, food security and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda—all to protect shared interests and expand development space for the developing world.

China's engagement in Africa also focuses on industrialization, with Chinese enterprises present

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A business manager from Hunan Modern Agriculture International Development Co. Ltd. checks the growth of chili peppers with a local staff member at the Gashora Farm in Nyagatare District, Rwanda, on May 22

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Staff of Kilimall, the first Chinese e-commerce company in Africa, sort goods at a warehouse in Mlolongo, Kenya, on June 3

across the continent, building factories and infrastructure that facilitate the transfer of technology and empower African economies to join the ranks of manufacturing nations.

Moreover, China is integrating AI technologies into cooperation plans. Hardly any joint forum or workshop today is without discussions on AI. China also welcomes African visitors to Beijing for training programs and showcases in renewable energy projects, reflecting a genuine desire to share expertise and innovation.

Thus, the GGI seeks to spread China's values of progress, share its development experience and prepare African economies to meet rising global demand, enhance exchange and restore the continent's rightful place within a fairer global governance framework.

The Belt and Road Initiative

To prevent Africa from remaining a "cake" divided by foreign interests, African policymakers must recognize that their collective strength lies in South-South unity.

China, which proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), financing ports, roads, health and education projects in African nations, is well positioned to shape the future framework of Africa's external relations.

The BRI, an initiative boosting connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, especially the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, includes several countries in East and Southeast Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar and South Africa), in North Africa (Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria), as well as inland states such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

By 2025, more than 150 countries and 30 international organizations had signed onto the BRI. China has signed memorandums of understanding with 52 African countries and the African Union on jointly implementing the BRI.

In contrast, continued Western hegemony and military interventions to install compliant regimes represent a futile attempt to obstruct the emergence of a new global order based on balance and civilizational diversity.

Western blocs, mired in economic stagnation and cultural arrogance, continue to push Africa toward harsh neoliberal globalization, while China offers a fair, socialist-oriented model that aligns with national development goals and provides a secure environment for investment and shared prosperity.

On June 11, representatives from China, 53 African countries and the African Union Commission met in Changsha, Hunan Province, to advance the full implementation of the outcomes achieved at last year's FOCAC summit in Beijing.

President Xi sent a message to the opening ceremony of the ministerial coordinators' meeting, emphasizing the importance of solidarity and cooperation between China and Africa, and announcing new measures to deepen partnership with the continent.

His message reflected a profound understanding of the need to strengthen this partnership and recognize Africa's central role in the international landscape. With Africa being one of the largest continents and China the world's largest developing economy, their growing proximity helps safeguard cultural diversity and provides balance in an era of rapid global change.

China's wisdom lies not only in calling for the unity of the Global South through the GGI but also in laying down the practical foundations for success—dynamic markets, adaptable economies and resilient cultural roots that withstand external shocks. Solidarity, in China's vision, rests on mutual benefit, trust and the defense of Global South unity, free trade, global development cooperation, a just international order and the flourishing of civilizational diversity. **BR**

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A NEW WAY FORWARD

GGI underscores Beijing's growing role in empowering the Global South toward a fairer, more inclusive world order By Li Wenhan

China's newly proposed Global Governance Initiative (GGI) was a major topic of discussion at the Global Governance Roundtable for Shanghai Cooperation Organization Countries 2025, held in Beijing on October 16. Consensus at the meeting was that the GGI responds to the shared aspirations of people around the world, meets the pressing needs of the times and injects fresh momentum into building a fairer, more just and more inclusive international order.

Jointly organized by China International Communications Group (CICG), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Secretariat and the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), the event brought together more than 150 scholars and officials from China and abroad.

Building consensus

Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the GGI at the "SCO Plus" Meeting in Tianjin Municipality on September 1.

"I look forward to working with all countries for a more just and equitable global governance system and advancing toward a community with a shared future for humanity," Xi said when addressing the meeting.

The initiative outlines five core principles: adhering to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, advocating the people-centered approach and focusing on taking concrete actions.

According to United Nations Resident Coordinator in China Siddharth Chatterjee, the timing of the GGI reflects growing global crises marked by the digital divide, climate change, geopolitical tensions and widening inequality.

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Signage of China-Kazakhstan (Xi'an) Trade Logistics terminal in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on August 1

The GGI provides a forward-looking framework that brings countries together and calls for a greater voice for developing nations, as well as deeper consultation and broader consensus on issues concerning science, technology, human wellbeing and global governance, he said.

CICG President Chang Bo said the roundtable, held under the SCO framework, embodies the Shanghai Spirit by enhancing mutual understanding and trust among member states, and represents concrete action in implementing the GGI.

He emphasized that platforms such as the SCO should remain committed to openness and inclusiveness, expanding global cooperation in governance; to innovation, in order to unleash greater efficiency in governance; and to mutual learning among civilizations, which lays a shared foundation of values for global governance.

Nurlan Yermekbayev, Secretary General of the SCO, echoed these remarks, noting that in recent years the organization has become an important platform for the exchange of national governance experience. "Member states have reached consensus and taken practical steps in areas such as political security, economic and trade cooperation, and cultural exchange," he said.

Sun Linjiang, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Eurasian Affairs, said China is ready to work hand in hand with partners across the

COURTESY PHOTO

Participants at the Global Governance Roundtable for Shanghai Cooperation Organization Countries 2025 in Beijing on October 16

SCO family to practice the shared values of humanity and to implement in a systematic way the four China-proposed global initiatives—the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), the Global Civilizations Initiative (GCI) and the GGI.

A global vision

The GGI is the fourth of these landmark global initiatives, following the GDI proposed in 2021, the GSI in 2022 and the GCI in 2023.

China has emerged as a key contributor to multilateral cooperation over recent decades, Chatterjee said on the sidelines of the roundtable. He stressed that the GGI calls for a system in which developing countries have a stronger voice.

During the event, participants also held in-depth discussions across three subforums focusing on practicing multilateralism, deepening trust on security and upholding openness and win-win cooperation.

Through the GDI, China has aligned South-South cooperation and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, supporting projects in poverty reduction, food security and green transition; through the GSI, it has reaffirmed the centrality of the UN Charter, serving as the largest troop contributor and second largest financial contributor among Security Council members to UN peacekeeping and extending support to African Union operations, Chatterjee said.

Through the GCI, it has promoted dialogue and mutual understanding, culminating in the UN's recognition of June 10 as the International Day for Dialogue Among Civilizations, he added.

"At the national level, the UN Country Team in China, which I am privileged to lead, continues to work in close partnership with the government of China to translate global commitments into concrete results. Guided by the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, our collaboration supports China's journey toward carbon neutrality, inclusive innovation, and enhanced global engagement, including through cooperation with the SCO region and beyond," he said.

There are great opportunities for China's economic growth prospects, as the country has implemented the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) very effectively and is steadily moving toward the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30).

In the first three quarters of this year, the world's second largest economy grew 5.2 percent year on year, contributing roughly 30 percent of global growth.

China's foreign trade powered ahead with high-quality growth in the first nine months of this year despite increasing external headwinds, according to the General Administration of Customs of China. Total merchandise trade in yuan-denominated terms rose to 33.61 trillion yuan ($4.71 trillion) from January-September, up 4 percent year on year.

"I'm quite confident and optimistic about China's economic growth, prosperity and bringing everybody along to progress toward human development," Chatterjee said.

Sudheendra Kulkarni, founder of the Forum for New South Asia and formerly an adviser to then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, called for greater efficiency and solidarity among Global South countries, emphasizing that closer cooperation between China and India could unleash enormous potential.

If China and India can stand together and stay on the same wavelength, it will massively boost the collective power of the Global South, he said.

Kulkarni observed that the world is now "shifting from a Western-dominated old order toward a new order increasingly shaped by the Global South." However, he warned that some Western nations still cling to the principle that "might makes right," citing the United States' lack of respect for multilateral mechanisms such as the World Trade Organization, its use of tariffs as political weapons and its tendency to lecture others on global governance.

He underscored that the most important aspect of the GGI is the people-centered approach.

"Both development and governance must place people at the heart of their purpose," Kulkarni said. "Without putting people first, there can be no better world order." **BR**

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Returning to the Table

By Liang Xiao

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, also the Chinese lead person for China-U.S. economic and trade affairs, held trade consultations with the U.S. side in Malaysia from October 24 to 27. The consultations focused on key issues in China-U.S. economic and trade relations, following the important consensus reached by the two countries' heads of state during their phone calls earlier this year.

On the morning of October 18 (Beijing Time), He held a video call with the U.S. lead negotiators, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. The call was the first high-level direct communication between the two sides since China implemented new regulations on rare earth export controls on October 9 and the U.S. threatened to impose triple-digit tariffs.

For over a week, tensions between China and the U.S. over trade issues have been escalating. U.S. Treasury Secretary Bessent called Li Chenggang, China international trade representative with the Ministry of Commerce and Vice Minister of Commerce "aggressive" and "highly provocative."

These accusations came as a surprise to the world, as many people perceive the U.S. as the more aggressive party at the negotiating table. They are not only a reflection of America's long-standing national confidence, coming from "a position of strength," but also a common negotiating tactic used by U.S. representatives—employing maximum pressure to break down their opponents' psychological defenses.

A story has been circulating online for many years about Robert Lighthizer, the U.S. Trade Representative in the first Donald Trump administration from 2017 to 2021, dubbed the "Trade Czar." According to *Los Angeles Times*, in the 1980s, he represented the U.S. Government in trade negotiations with Japan. Allegedly, he folded Japan's negotiation list into a paper airplane and threw it at the Japanese delegation, stating that the U.S. was not there to listen to Japan's conditions, but to see whether Japan would accept America's terms. Although *Beijing Review* is unable to verify the story, it is enough to illustrate that America's domineering image has deeply ingrained itself in the public's mind.

Another real and widely known example of these pressure tactics occurred on March 18, 2021, during the China-U.S. high-level strategic dialogue in Anchorage, Alaska. The opening of the dialogue was initially meant to involve a brief two-minute speech by each side's representatives in front of the media, followed by a closed-door meeting. However, what should have been a diplomatic warm-up turned into a talk show, where U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan used the opportunity to attack China's internal and foreign policies before the global media. This forced the Chinese representative, Yang Jiechi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission Office, to respond forcefully, stating: "The U.S. should not be condescending in its tone when speaking to China, as the Chinese people never buy it. Mutual respect is always a basis for dealing with China."

U.S. officials should abandon their condescending attitude and return to the foundation of equality and mutual respect

Indeed, the rule for dealing with China is mutual respect. It was the U.S. that first initiated the trade war with the whole world, including China, the U.S. that first imposed export and technology controls on China, and the U.S. that first added extra port fees on Chinese vessels. Yet, when China responded with countermeasures, the U.S. shifted the blame onto China and attempted to continue pressuring China to make concessions. This is clearly not the correct way to engage.

If the U.S. truly hopes the economic and trade talks in Malaysia pave the way for a higher-level China-U.S. summit and resolve America's economic, trade and domestic issues, then its officials should abandon their condescending attitude and return to the foundation of equality and mutual respect.

China's position on managing China-U.S. economic and trade issues has been consistent and clear: "Our doors are open, if the U.S. wants to talk. Dialogue and negotiation must be based on equality, respect and mutual benefit. We will fight, if fight we must. Pressure, threats and blackmail are not the right way to deal with China." This has been repeatedly emphasized. **BR**

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A Strategic Pause? The China-Mexico Nexus

By Lan Xinzhen

The Mexican Government recently paused a controversial plan to impose tariffs of up to 50 percent on imports from China and other countries that have not signed free trade agreements with it. The proposed measure, announced on September 10, targeted 1,371 categories of products—from automobiles and steel to textiles and toys—affecting 16.8 percent of Mexico's imports.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum on October 9 said her administration is analyzing potential changes, emphasizing the need for further international consultations before submitting a revised proposal to Congress. This abrupt halt to a plan initially slated for quick passage signals the government's caution in evaluating the proposed tariff hikes' economic and diplomatic consequences.

Analysts attribute the shift to pressure from the United States. During a meeting with the Mexican president in early September, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio reportedly expressed dissatisfaction with Mexico-China trade relations, continuing a pattern of U.S. pressure to reduce Mexico's imports from China.

On September 25, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) issued two announcements: One to initiate an anti-dumping investigation into pecan imports from Mexico and the U.S., and the other to launch an investigation into trade and investment barriers posed by Mexico's proposed restrictive measures against China.

A MOFCOM spokesperson said in the current context of the United States' abuse of tariff hikes, all countries should jointly oppose all forms of unilateralism and protectionism, and must not sacrifice the interests of third parties under the coercion of others.

China's resolute response should signal to the Mexican Government that its unilateral tariff hikes, if implemented, would not only harm the interests of trading partners like China but also severely undermine the certainty of Mexico's business environment.

Such a move would diminish international capital's confidence in investing in Mexico. Halting this misguided proposal is ultimately an act of safeguarding Mexico's own economic interests, international reputation and future.

For years, China has been Mexico's second largest trading partner, while Mexico has consistently been China's second largest trading partner in Latin America. According to official Mexican data, trade between Mexico and China reached a record high in the first half of 2025. Mexico's imports from China totaled $62.1 billion, while its exports to China reached $4.6 billion. This strong growth underscores a deepening, mutually beneficial economic relationship, reflected in expanding trade volumes, growing investments, industrial chain collaboration and cooperation in emerging sectors.

The two countries share a long-standing friendship, characterized by growing political mutual trust and enhanced people-to-people exchange. Their economic and trade relations are not only intensive but also highly complementary. Both hold similar views on multiple international issues, jointly advocating for inclusive economic globalization.

Against a backdrop of global supply chain restructuring, the green transition and consumption upgrading, China and Mexico have seen a rapid expansion in trade, an acceleration of investment cooperation, a deepening of industrial chain complementarity, and continuous breakthroughs in emerging fields. This has forged a new, dynamic pattern of mutually beneficial economic and trade relations.

During a meeting with Mexican Foreign Secretary Juan Ramón de la Fuente on May 14, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China is ready to work with Mexico to strengthen solidarity and cooperation, enhance communication and coordination within multilateral frameworks, and jointly safeguard each other's legitimate rights and interests. He further emphasized China's commitment to joining Mexico in upholding and practicing multilateralism, resisting and opposing unilateral acts, defending free trade rules, and advocating for an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

One of Mexico's major concerns right now may be that the United States-Canada-Mexico free trade agreement is due for review next year. The Sheinbaum administration's stance toward China will arguably affect how Washington addresses Mexico's demands during the process. However, tariffs on China are not necessarily the decisive factor of Washington's attitude, and Mexico also needs to defend its independence and autonomy, as well as uphold international multilateral trade rules.

As Chinese Ambassador to Mexico Chen Daojiang put it: The best way to avoid getting caught in a tariff spiral is to avoid falling into the trap of protectionism in the first place. **BR**

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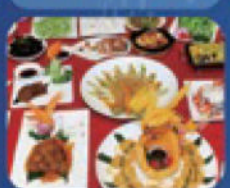

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The Resilience Formula

China's economy shows stable growth amid challenges By Tao Xing

China's economy has managed to withstand pressures and achieved hard-won progress in the first three quarters of this year, with the country's GDP growing 5.2 percent year on year during this period, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), released on October 20.

Since the beginning of this year, global economic growth has lacked momentum, trade protectionism has been on the rise and issues including geopolitical conflict and international trade friction have frequently occurred, an NBS spokesperson said during a press conference on the same day.

Moreover, for China, the adverse impacts of changes in the external environment have worsened, domestic effective demand remains insufficient and some enterprises are facing operational difficulties, posing weighty challenges to maintaining stable economic performance.

"In this context, China has achieved 5.2 percent economic growth, fully demonstrating its strong resilience and ability to adapt and break through difficulties in an unstable and uncertain environment," the spokesperson said, adding that the growth rate ranks among the top of major economies worldwide, making China a consistently stable and reliable driver of global economic growth.

"Steady economic growth in the first three quarters has laid a solid foundation for achieving the full-year target, and there remain many favorable conditions for reaching the goal," the spokesperson added. China's full-year GDP growth target for 2025 is around 5 percent, a goal that was clearly outlined in the 2025 Government Work Report released in early March.

Boosting domestic demand

"Overall, the first three quarters have seen stable growth and steady employment. Domestic consumption and investment—the major sources of domestic demand—continue to play an active role in supporting economic growth," Zhang Jianping, Deputy Director of the Academic Committee of the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, told *Beijing Review*.

According to the NBS, the surveyed urban unemployment rate averaged 5.2 percent in the first three quarters. This rate went down 0.1 percentage point from August to 5.2 percent in September. Furthermore, final consumption expenditure contributed 53.5 percent to economic growth, up 9 percentage points from last year, continuing to serve as the economy's main driving force.

China has announced a raft of measures to expand the scope of its consumer goods trade-in program this year, including new subsidies for purchasing digital products like smartphones, tablets, smartwatches and wristbands, as well as the increased number of home appliance categories.

The consumer goods trade-in program stimulates domestic demand by incentivizing the replacement of old products with new, energy-efficient models. This initiative supports the country's broader goals of high-quality economic growth, reduced environmental impact and upgraded consumption structure.

Earlier this year, China issued ultra-long-term special treasury bonds totaling 300 billion yuan ($42 billion) to support the program, compared with last year's 150 billion yuan ($21 billion) allocated for the initiative.

This financial support has effectively boosted household consumption. For example, as of September 10, the number of applications for automobile trade-ins nationwide had exceeded 8.3 million, meaning that more than

China's Economic Performance in Q1-Q3 2025

- GDP reached over **101.5 trillion yuan** ($14.2 trillion), up 5.2 percent year on year.
- The tertiary industry expanded **5.4 percent** year on year, outpacing a 3.8-percent increase of the primary industry and a 4.9-percent increase of the second industry.
- Value-added industrial output increased **6.2 percent** compared to the same period last year.
- Value-added service output rose to nearly **59.3 trillion yuan** ($8.3 trillion), accounting for 58.4 percent of GDP, 0.8 percentage points higher than that in the same period last year.
- Per-capita disposable income reached **32,509 yuan** ($4,564), a 5.2-percent year-on-year increase after deducting price factors.
- Fixed assets investment dropped 0.5 percent year on year to about **37.2 trillion yuan** ($5.2 trillion).

(Source: *National Bureau of Statistics*)

XINHUA

Automated production operations at SERES Auto Super Factory in Chongqing's Liangjiang New Area on September 19

30,000 people applied for a new car each day on average. The "old-for-new" program has also brought more high-quality products into people's daily lives, with retail sales of energy-efficient appliances and smart home devices continuing to grow rapidly in the first three quarters.

China's retail sales of consumer goods went up 4.5 percent year on year to nearly 36.59 trillion yuan ($5.13 trillion) in the first three quarters. In September, they rose 3 percent year on year to 4.2 trillion yuan ($589 billion).

"A stronger-than-expected outturn in recent quarters—reflecting front-loading in international trade and relatively robust domestic consumption supported by fiscal expansion in 2025—more than offset the headwinds from higher uncertainty and tariffs," the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said of China's growth prospects in its October World Economy Outlook report.

"In the fourth quarter, we can further expand domestic demand, particularly focusing on unlocking consumer market potential," Zhang said. "We will build a diversified consumption landscape, foster a sound consumer market environment and ensure that our consumption subsidy policies are accurately implemented to deliver real benefits to consumers."

Promoting new engines

Since the beginning of this year, many sectors have tailored the development of new quality productive forces to local conditions, continuously optimizing the economic structure and facilitating an orderly shift from old to new growth drivers.

New quality productive forces feature hi-tech, high efficiency and high quality, in line with the nation's new development philosophy with a focus on innovative, coordinated, green and open development for all.

For example, industries such as large language AI models, robots, aerospace and autonomous driving have been continuously injecting fresh momentum into the country's economic development.

In the first three quarters, output of industrial robots, service robots and high-speed train sets rose 29.8 percent, 16.3 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively.

In line with the major trend of green and low-carbon development, China has been briskly developing clean energy and focusing on the creation of new growth points in green development.

In the first three quarters, power generation from wind and solar energy by industrial ▸▸

enterprises with an annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan ($2.8 million) both achieved double-digit year-on-year growth. Output of new-energy products, including new-energy vehicles, lithium-ion power batteries for automobiles and solar cells, increased 29.7 percent, 46.9 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

In 2024, national research and development (R&D) expenditure increased 8.9 percent year on year, and R&D intensity, which measures commitment to innovation and future growth rather than just the absolute amount of money spent, rose 0.11 percentage points compared with the previous year. Since the beginning of this year, several sectors have continued to boost innovation investment, mainly in emerging industries. In the first three quarters, investment in the automobile manufacturing sector, as well as in railway, shipbuilding, aerospace and other transportation equipment manufacturing, maintained double-digit year-on-year growth.

In terms of supporting investment, "we also need to find ways to reduce operating costs for private enterprises and stimulate their investment enthusiasm," Zhang said.

Besides, emerging industries are thriving. New consumption models, including live-commerce, a combination of live-streaming and e-commerce, and social commerce, or the direct buying and selling of products or services within a social media platform, are growing rapidly, with related online retail sales in the first three quarters increasing 9.8 percent year on year.

Strengthening foreign trade

In April, when U.S. President Donald Trump shook global trade norms by announcing sweeping tariffs, the IMF trimmed its forecast for China's growth by 0.6 percentage points in response to escalating China-U.S. trade frictions. By July, following a pause on higher rates in May, it revised the figure upward by 0.8 percentage points. Half a year after the tariff war began, the IMF projected in the October report that China's economy would maintain the growth rate it predicted in July, 4.8 percent, and that it will slow down modestly next year.

Days earlier, the World Bank put China's economy growth at 4.8 percent for 2025; in April it had forecast growth of 4 percent.

"The trade frictions between China and the

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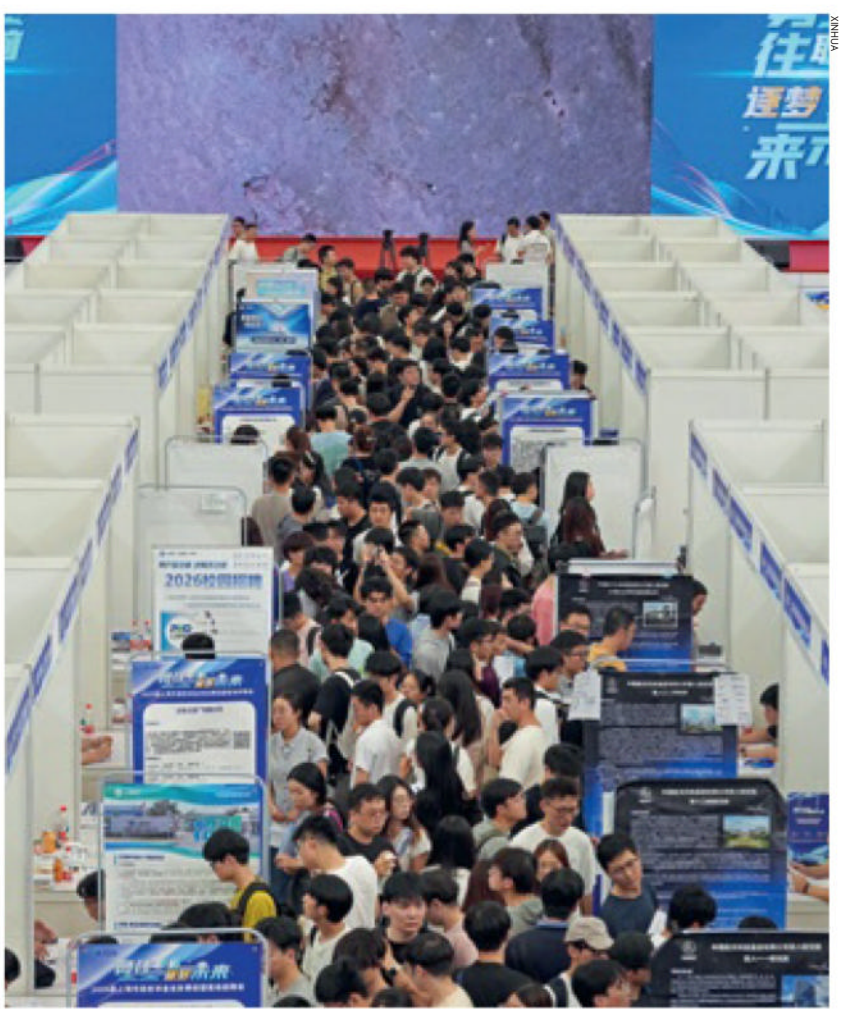
An agricultural products market in Beijing on September 19



XINHUA

A job fair at the Minhang Campus of Shanghai Jiao Tong University in Shanghai on September 26

XINHUA

Vessels conduct container loading and unloading operations at the Dapukou container terminal in the Jintang port area of Ningbo-Zhoushan Port, Zhejiang Province, on October 13

U.S. are expected to persist for a long time. In the process of tension and struggle, China needs to work hard to keep differences in bilateral economic and trade relations under control, while also safeguarding the country's interests through strategic efforts," Zhang said.

"We need to reduce our dependence on the U.S. market and actively expand diversified foreign trade markets, with a particular emphasis on tapping the market potential of Belt and Road partner countries, especially those in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to support stable foreign trade and economic growth," Zhang added. The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative works to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

China's total goods imports and exports in yuan-denominated terms rose to 33.61 trillion yuan ($4.71 trillion) in the first nine months of 2025, up 4 percent year on year, data from General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) showed on October 13.

During the same period, China's goods trade with Belt and Road partner countries totaled 17.37 trillion yuan ($2.43 trillion), 6.2 percent higher than a year earlier, GACC data revealed. Trade with ASEAN, Latin American, African and Central Asian nations grew 9.6 percent, 3.9 percent, 19.5 percent and 16.7 percent year on year, respectively, while that with other economies in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) increased 2 percent.

Zhang also advocated for fully leveraging the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—a free trade pact among 15 Asia-Pacific nations including China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the 10 ASEAN member states. He emphasized harnessing the agreement's trade creation effects and boosting mutual investment to drive trade growth.

"This includes accelerating enterprises' overseas expansion and using two-way investment to strengthen cooperation in our supply and value chains, thereby steadily enhancing China's industrial and foreign trade competitiveness," he added. **BR**

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The Equality Equation

Digging into the multi-faceted journey of women's empowerment in China

By Li Fangfang

For Yan Liang, Chair Professor of Economics at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, the United States, the data are daunting. Following recent high-profile meetings on women—the Global Leaders' Meeting on Women (GLMW) in Beijing in mid-October and the High-Level Conference on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women at the United Nations headquarters in New York City on September 23—she observed that, despite decades of efforts, achieving full gender equality "could still take centuries."

It is a tale of strides in empowerment, but also of persistent, deeply rooted challenges, set against a backdrop of global turbulence and shifting priorities that underscore the universal complexities of this journey.

"When you look at the Sustainable Development Goal score for Goal 5 (Gender Equality), we are only 15.4 percent of the way toward the 2030 targets," Liang told *Beijing Review* during an October 15 online discussion on building women's influence. "This means we're still very much lagging in achieving gender equality and development. That's why this kind of conference at this time is very important."

A moment for global reflection

On October 13-14, Beijing hosted the GLMW, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the landmark 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, which adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In the decades since, a global surge in women's empowerment has unfolded, illuminating the path of human progress.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said at the GLMW that over the past three decades, 189 countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, with nearly 100 countries enacting some 1,600 laws and regulations to protect women's rights. Additionally, many nations have adopted action plans to improve women's wellbeing.

UN Secretary General António Guterres described the Beijing Declaration as "the most ambitious global political commitment on women's rights ever achieved," emphasizing its role in advancing legal protection, political participation and education for women worldwide.

Pakistani scholar Zoon Ahmed Khan highlighted the declaration's milestone status. "Sixty years ago, even in the most developed societies, the idea that women are too emotional to lead was widely accepted. Thirty years ago, the Beijing Declaration recognized women's rights as a global consensus," she said during the online discussion.

According to UN Women, the number of women in national parliaments has more than doubled globally over the past 30 years, with the percentage of seats held by women rising from 11.3 percent in 1995 to 27.2 percent in 2025. Moreover, nearly 100 discriminatory laws have been repealed. Girls are now far more likely to be enrolled in and complete their education than at any time in history, Executive Director of UN Women Sima Bahous stated in her remarks at the opening of the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN headquarters on March 10.

In China, 690 million women had managed to lift themselves out of extreme poverty as of late 2020, the time at which the country achieved the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development poverty reduction target a decade ahead of schedule. Today, women constitute over 40 percent of China's workforce and more than half of its Internet startup founders.

"We see how China is advancing in terms of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), business, sports, etc. Women are playing a tremendous role in that. And it all started with Chairman Mao Zedong, who mentioned 'women hold up half of the sky'—which has created a transformation in China," Indian national Subhashish Panda, a multinational company employee, said during the online exchange.

Liang's subsequent comparison to the U.S. provides more context for China's own gender equality challenges. She pointed out that even a developed nation like the U.S. suffers from regressive trends, including a persistent gender pay gap and restrictions on reproductive rights, despite having more women CEOs. This illustrates a key point: No country has a perfect record. The global struggle for gender equality is complex and uneven, meaning every nation, including China, faces a mix of advances and stubborn setbacks.

A tale of two tiers

While acknowledging global advances, the experts did go on to stress some of the continuing disparities during the discussion. Khan, who has lived in China for years, pointed to a constant gap at the grassroots level. She noted that in many developing countries, women remain economically marginalized. "They see themselves as isolated," she said.

This "tale of two tiers"—where women's representation increases in high-level positions but stagnates at the grassroots—is evident globally. Khan shared some observations from her home country: Although women are at times elected to high office, ordinary families still hesitate to send their daughters to work due to safety concerns and social norms.

"The story might be different in bigger cities, but even progressive families often don't see it as a viable option," Khan explained. "It's the patriarchy. It's the control. It's the system that's been in place for long enough to create this perception that somehow it is against religious teachings for women to become more financially independent, to become more autonomous."

Similarly, in the U.S., Liang mentioned that despite improvements in leadership, with the percentage of women CEOs in *Fortune* 500 companies rising to 11 percent in 2025 from 7.4 percent in 2020, regressive trends persist at a fundamental level.

"The gender pay gap has [remained largely stagnant and, in some measures,] widened in recent years—the first time since 2003," she said. The pay gap between full-time, year-round workers, for example, actually increased from 16 percent in 2022 to 17 percent in 2023, a pointed setback.

Another alarming trend, Liang added, is the restriction of abortion access in many U.S. states following the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022, which has profoundly undermined women's reproductive rights and wellbeing.

In India, Panda described a stark dichotomy: Urban women are gradually progressing, but rural women are regressing. He emphasized the need for cross-country learning, suggesting that India could replicate aspects of China's approach to enhance women's societal participation.

This approach combines strong legal protections and state-led economic programs to actively integrate women into the workforce and public life as a driver of national development. It includes using quotas for political representation, poverty alleviation projects targeting women and promoting female achievements in education and business.

For a country like India, the transferable lessons might include the strategic use of quotas in local governance, the explicit integration of women's economic empowerment into national development plans and large-scale digital and financial literacy campaigns targeted specifically at rural women.

Intersections and the way forward

Liang stressed that gender issues intersect with geography, race and income, among others. "'Gender' is not a simple concept or a simple construct; it intersects with the many other identities and social positions of women."

Khan agreed, particularly for developing countries, where resource divides are steepening. "The representation of women in public offices may cover up the urgency to address gender inequality substantively," she said. "Having women in leadership roles is important, but that does not necessarily translate into equal participation and opportunities on a broader societal level."

"China is taking the lead through initiatives like global governance frameworks to protect women's rights, improving laws and institutions, fostering inclusive social development and supporting women's engagement in governance," Liang added.

Technology adds another layer of complexity. AI is reshaping the world in a male-dominated industry, often reinforcing discrimination through biased data and algorithms, Guterres warned in his address at the High-Level Conference on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

"We must confront violence and online hate, and ensure that technology serves equality, not exclusion," he said, advocating for more investment in women's education in STEM.

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Zhang Guimei, Principal of the Huaping High School for Girls in Lijiang, Yunnan Province, sees to it that students return to school after taking the national college entrance exam on June 8, 2024. The school, founded by Zhang in 2008, is China's first free public high school for girls

"Women's participation in decision-making is not a gift; it is a right that strengthens societies and boosts equality," Guterres emphasized.

To address these gaps, China has already taken concrete steps since the GLWM concluded on October 14, such as establishing the Global Center for Women's Capacity Building at China Women's University in Beijing.

Huang Xiaowei, deputy head of the National Working Committee on Children and Women of the State Council, China's highest state administrative organ, and Vice President of the All-China Women's Federation, said at the center's unveiling ceremony that the center demonstrates China's commitment to "walking the talk."

Huang expressed hope that the center will foster international exchange, capacity-building cooperation and initiatives to enhance female leadership and digital literacy, in turn contributing to a new paradigm for women's development and the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

"These steps and measures need to be taken in a coherent and holistic way, really trying to mobilize our social societal resources," Liang said. "I think the challenges are just so serious right now and that's why these kinds of all-out efforts, all our efforts, are very much needed." **BR**

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When Myth Morphs Into Momentum

A tropical paradise is now the epicenter of China's commercial space race

By Tao Zihui

"If once together with the wind the Da Peng bird could rise,
He would fly 90,000 miles up to the skies."

These are the opening lines of a famous poem by Li Bai, a renowned poet of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The Da Peng bird, a mythical giant bird of prey also known as great roc, symbolizes grand prospects and soaring ambition in Li's metaphor.

On October 16, this symbolism became reality on the southeastern coast of Wenchang in the southernmost Chinese province of Hainan. A Long March 8 carrier rocket, with fiery intensity, rose from the Hainan Commercial Space Launch Site before eager eyes. The launch site is built and operated by Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Co. Ltd. (HICAL). The mission successfully delivered 12 low-Earth-orbit satellites for a satellite Internet constellation into their designated orbits.

This launch was the fourth flight of the Long March 8 rocket since its maiden flight earlier this year, and the milestone 600th mission for the Long March rocket series.

"With this consecutive success, we are proud to have contributed to the Long March rocket's 600th launch," Yang Tianliang, Chairman of HICAL, told *Beijing Review*. Behind these words lies the company's arduous journey in pioneering China's commercial space industry.

Space infrastructure

Several years ago, this site was an expanse of coconut groves and fish ponds. Today, formidable space infrastructure stands tall.

In 2022, the Central Government approved the construction of China's first commercial space launch site there, mandating its completion within 18 months and operational readiness within two years. Yang's first impression upon arriving at the site was one of disbelief: a dirt road leading to coastal coconut groves, a makeshift fence, a single pile driver and a dozen workers—nothing more.

Manpower, experience and technology were all in short supply. Few within the company had prior experience in the space sector, many employees had never even seen a launch site, and no design firm could provide a blueprint for such a facility. Faced with this, the team embarked on a dual mission: building the workforce while racing against time.

The company brought in nearly 400 talents from across the aerospace sector, who started by immersing themselves in conceptualizing architectures. Soon, the No.1 and No.2 launch pads were completed, the propellant loading and gas supply systems passed all subsystem integration tests in just three months, and the 110-kilovolt commercial space power station was connected with the grid in a mere 203 days.

Growth, however, was not without setbacks. In September 2024, super typhoon *Mogic* struck the launch site head-on. Yet, the site survived and emerged stronger.

Breakthroughs are now evident in efficiency.

This September, inside the dedicated assembly and testing hall for the Long March 8 series, rocket segments lay prone in assembly bays as technicians worked diligently. The assembled core stages were to be transported to adjacent

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The No.3 (near) and No.4 (far) launch pads are under construction for the second phase of the Hainan Commercial Space Launch Site in Hainan Province on September 5

high-bay facilities for testing before being conveyed to the launch tower.

During *Beijing Review*'s visit, a Long March 8 rocket had already been transferred to the No.1 launch pad on September 30, awaiting its launch window. The presence of two rockets, poised like relay athletes, demonstrated the site's capacity for seamless, high-density launch operations. Earlier, the site had achieved two consecutive launches within five days, denoting its official entry into a new era of high-frequency, routine launches.

"It functions more as a foundational infrastructure," Yang explained. "With the launch site established, more rocket and satellite companies can cluster their operations here." Traditionally, rockets are assembled and tested in a factory, then disassembled for transport and painstakingly reassembled at the launch site. At the Hainan facility, rockets can be transported directly from the factory to the launch pad, drastically reducing time and costs while enhancing overall efficiency.

Commercial space chain

As a strategic emerging industry and new growth engine, the commercial space sector is evolving at a breakneck pace, calling for more launch pads. The Hainan Commercial Space Launch Site grows to meet this rising demand.

On January 25, construction of the site's second phase officially commenced. Spanning approximately 455 hectares, it will include the No.3 and No.4 launch pads and their supporting facilities, with operations scheduled to begin by the end of 2026.

"Upon completion, the four pads are projected to facilitate over 60 launches annually, with the launch cycle for a single pad reduced from a month to just 10 days or even a week," Yang said, his weathered face radiating pride and accomplishment.

Unlike other launch sites in China, the Hainan facility is tailored exclusively for commercial space endeavors, incorporating multiple innovations from its inception to optimize cost and time efficiency.

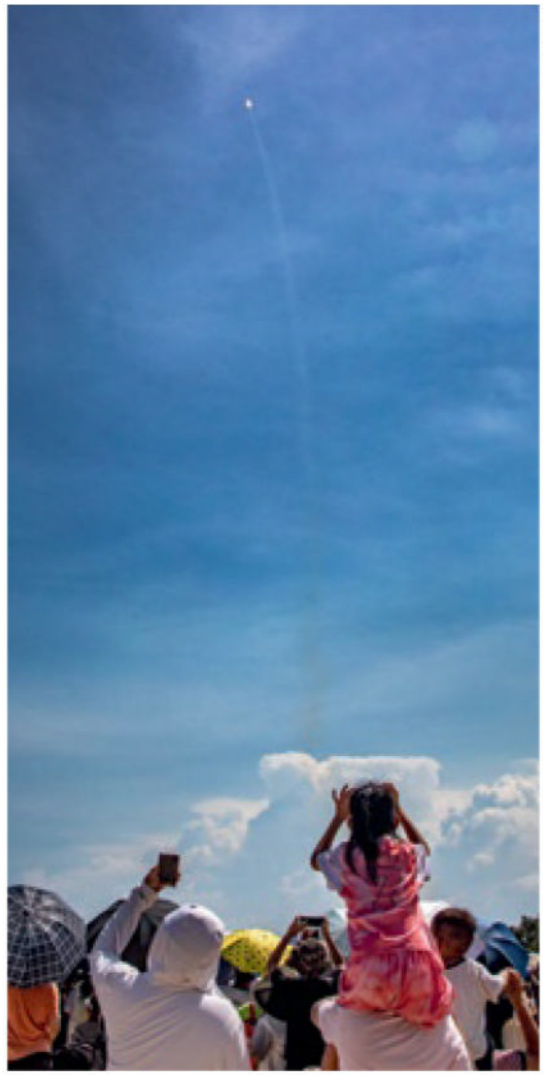
Its low-latitude position at 19 degrees north of the Equator enhances the payload capacity of rockets by 10 to 15 percent, while facing the sea on three sides facilitates maritime transport and ensures safe, controlled oceanic landing.

Policy advantages are equally pronounced. The Hainan Free Trade Port's policies—including zero tariffs, low tax rates, a simplified tax system and regulations enabling secure cross-border data transfer—have fostered an innovative industrial ecosystem in Wenchang International Aerospace City. This ecosystem is characterized by a streamlined model: "Launch upon delivery, reuse upon return, operation upon launch and service upon data."

Wang Fengyu, Deputy Director of Wencheng International Space City Administration, elaborated: "Centered on the launch site, we've established an industrial system, comprising the rocket chain, satellite chain, data chain, space tourism and 'space plus' industries. Moving forward, we will strengthen and expand these chains to build a robust space industry cluster."

Commercial space development has also brought the public closer to the cosmos than ever before. Zhang Xiaojun, chief commander of the No.1 launch pad and a seasoned commander, lightened his tone when discussing public enthusiasm: "In Wenchang, people watch launches from the beach, coconut groves, rooftops and balconies. Each broadcast attracts a massive audience," he chuckled. "Generally, viewing is safe beyond a 2.5-km radius from the exclusion zone," he explained.

Simultaneously, the commercial space sector is increasingly integrating AI, big data and advanced computing, propelling space technology into everyday life. Academician Fan Ruixiang of the Chinese Academy of Sciences said that the success of the Hainan Commercial Space Launch Site has bridged serious gaps in the commercial space supply chain—a milestone for the sector's development in China.



CNS PHOTO

A rocket launch at the Hainan Commercial Space Launch Site on August 13

"To construct and accomplish its first mission in just over two years without prior technical accumulation—there is no precedent for this in global space construction history," Yang said. "We were the first to taste the crab." From coconut groves and fish ponds to a sturdy launch pad, this land now serves as the enduring foundation for China's commercial journey to the stars. **BR**

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A Close-Up of the Crossover Craze

IP collaboration is reshaping China's consumer landscape By Zhang Yage

When Li Lingyue placed her order for Luckin Coffee's Tamarind Americano on October 13, she wasn't just buying a warm beverage. She was securing a piece of a cleverly constructed crossover universe, created through a collaboration between the popular Chinese coffee chain and the blockbuster video game *Honor of Kings*. The beverage, dramatically titled Mask of Pain, is a freshly brewed light red tea whose refreshing taste is linked to the game's synonymous iconic equipment.

The collaboration extends to physical items. Cup sleeves are adorned with designs of iconic game assets like the Witch's Cloak and Famous Blade. Meanwhile, the collectible lineup, from tumblers and paper bags to stickers and keychains, was meticulously crafted to mirror the game's aesthetic, creating an immediate and nostalgic consumer connection.

A five-drink package even came with the full set of badges, while 10 hero-themed cups reimagined popular characters like Lan, Li Xin and Daji in modern urban styles.

SCREENSHOT

A fan showcases a collection of collaborative products between Chinese coffee chain Luckin Coffee and popular video game *Honor of Kings* on lifestyle and e-commerce app RedNote

"Aside from the cup bearing the image of my favorite game character, I also got a hot-stamped badge," Li said. "I originally wanted the set with the keychain. Even though I ordered it first thing in the morning, I failed to get it as it had sold out almost instantly. You can imagine how popular a collab between a popular game and a trendy coffee brand can be."

"To be honest, I'm not even really a coffee person," she admitted. "But the set was reasonably priced, so I bought it more for the collectibles. My friends who are genuine coffee lovers? They've all got at least one."

Li's experience is a snapshot of the explosive growth of the crossover economy in China. Driven by young consumers seeking emotional connection and self-expression, collaboration between brands, intellectual properties (IPs) and cultural institutions is creating new consumption paradigms and reshaping retail landscapes.

Policy push

Luckin's success with the *Honor of Kings* collaboration is no accident; it's the latest proof of a well-honed crossover strategy. In September 2023, the coffee chain made national headlines with its partnership with Chinese liquor giant Moutai, launching the controversial yet wildly popular "sauce-flavored latte." Priced at 38 yuan ($5.32) per cup and infused with a hint of the potent and pungent liquor, the drink quickly went viral, selling 5.42 million cups on its first day alone and generating over 100 million yuan ($14 million) in sales.

The co-branding not only drove tremendous traffic to Luckin stores but also sparked widespread social media discussion, demonstrating the powerful market pull of an unexpected brand alliance.

This sales model is encouraged by government policy. In September, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, China's highest state administrative organ, issued a special action plan for boosting consumption, advocating for the deeper integration of online and offline commercial, tourism, cultural and sports consumption, as well as innovative consumption scenarios.

Most recently, on September 30, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Commerce announced a notice on pilot programs for new consumption formats and models. These programs, piloted in about 50 major cities, will be supported by central fiscal subsidies—with 400 million yuan ($56 million) for each city with a permanent population exceeding 5 million, and less for other cities. According to the document, support should be given to crossover collaboration with famous IPs, and the development of themed stores and immersive consumption spaces that leverage local culture, historical IPs and domestic brands.

This policy push aligns perfectly with the shifting consumer mindset. "Young people's consumption psychology is undergoing a profound shift, moving from an emphasis on functional utility to emotional resonance, from mass conformity to personal expression," Xiong Xing, an associate professor with the School of Economics, Chongqing Technology and Business University, told Xinhua News Agency. "The crossover economy accurately captures this trend, endowing products with diverse value

SCREENSHOT

Collaborative products of Chinese hotpot chain Haidilao

through scarcity, customization and storytelling, thereby giving rise to new consumption paradigms."

According to a report published by Xinhua on July 31, the crossover economy in China is projected to approach 300 billion yuan ($42 billion) in scale this year.

Wan Zhe, a professor with the Belt and Road School of Beijing Normal University, told newspaper *National Business Daily* that the policy will help stimulate innovation vitality in the industrial ecosystem, creating new business formats and employment opportunities.

"For instance, when sports brands collaborate with intangible cultural heritage promoters to launch distinctive products, this can drive coordinated development across the entire industrial chain, ranging from design and production to services, forming a complete closed loop for the transformation of cultural and economic value. This not only revitalizes the development momentum of traditional industries but also creates more job opportunities for the emerging market," Wan added.

Wide applications

The crossover wave has swept across broad-ranging sectors, with cultural and museum IPs becoming particularly hot assets.

In Chongqing, a pop-up event launched in July for domestic doll and fashion brand Fufusoul proved immensely successful. A limited-edition co-branded doll, inspired by Chongqing's city flower, the Camellia, quickly became the city's most coveted souvenir.

"This specific doll isn't available in other cities. It's very meaningful as a gift for friends," a tourist surnamed Pan from Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, told Xinhua.

Similarly, the Chongqing China Three Gorges Museum has partnered with commercial brands to create derivative products based on its collections. One collaboration involved classical Chinese painting masterpiece *Night Revels of Han Xizai*, resulting in a Lego-style figurine named MASK Xizai that sold like hotcakes, flying off shelves to become an instant collector's item.

"Cultural elements can empower commercial brands, making them more exciting and meaningful," Chi Lin, Director of the Cultural Creation and Cooperation Department of the museum, told Xinhua. He noted that a collaboration between the museum and tea brand Chagee, based on a historical robe gifted from Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) Emperor Chongzhen to female general Qin Liangyu in recognition of her military merits, boosted museum traffic by 20 percent during the event. "The popularity of 'museum co-branding' is a vivid reflection of consumer cultural confidence."

Chi emphasized that the next step is to focus more on refining the cultural essence of relics and developing co-branded products that are educational and practical, to cater to young people's interests.

The film industry is also leveraging this trend to attract young audiences. Wanda Film, one of China's largest movie theater operators, has figured out a winning formula. By partnering with other brands for promotions, it is highly successful at getting young people to go to the movies. These campaigns directly lead to ticket sales, with the overwhelming majority of those sales coming from early 20-somethings. Data of a Wanda Film promotion in June showed a 30-percent movie-viewing conversion rate from some past activities, 85.5 percent of which came from users under 25.

"We found that young people are highly interested in innovative experiential cinema activities," Li Jinlei, General Manager of Wanda Film's subsidiary Mtime, told newspaper *China Youth Daily*. "They not only check in and buy merchandise but also get to socialize. The whole process provides a rich entertainment experience, effectively drawing them back to cinemas."

As young consumers like Li Lingyue continue to seek out products that offer both a tangible item and an intangible connection, the crossover economy, fueled by policy support and brand innovation, is poised to remain a powerful engine for China's ongoing consumption upgrade. **BR**

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SPRING BUD PROJECT

TOGETHER LET'S HELP LITTLE FLOWERS BLOSSOM

A New Window Into the Ancient Past

The Capital Museum in Beijing is hosting a special exhibition on the Liulihe Site, the largest known Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 B.C.) site unearthed in the southern foothills of the Yanshan Mountains, where modern-day Beijing is located. This groundbreaking display unveils the 3,000-year history of the Liulihe site—the original capital of the Yan State (1044-222 B.C.), widely recognized as the "source of Beijing."

Divided into four compelling sections, the exhibition uses a "trinity" of historical evidence—texts, the capital city's remains and artifacts—to bring this ancient world to life. It presents 180 carefully selected pieces, 113 of which are being seen by the public for the first time.

The event will run until November 28. **BR**

(Text and photos by Wei Yao)

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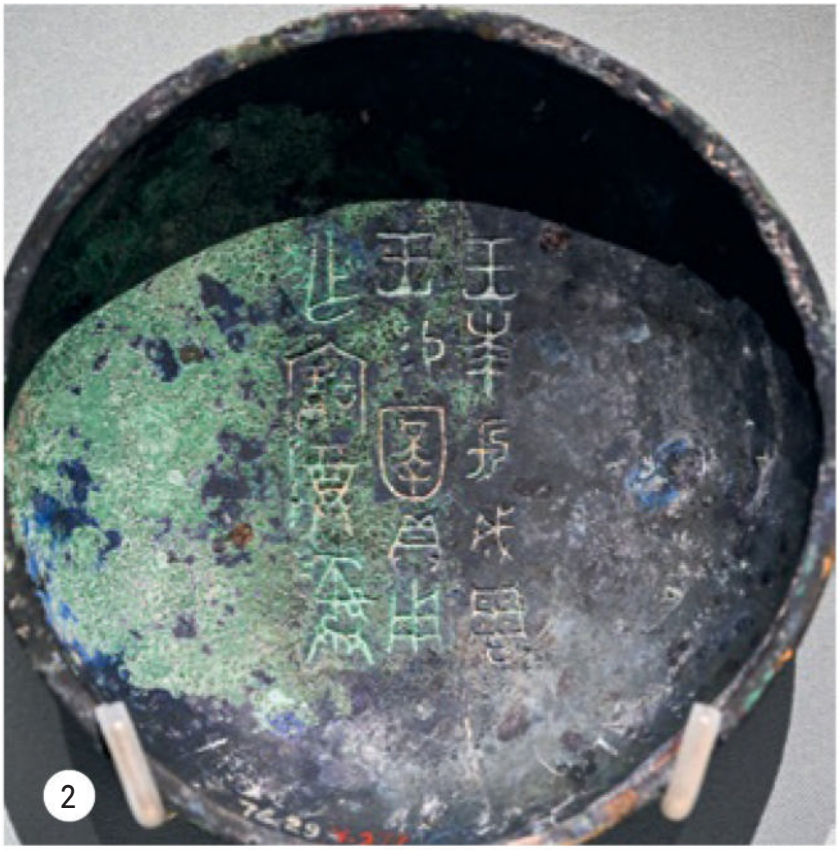

1. The ox-head patterned Boju Li with lid. *Li* is a type of bronze cauldron

2. The Yu Yan, a typical bronze cooking utensil from the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 B.C.)

3. Unearthed in 2021, the Zuocehuan bronze vessels (*ding*, *you* and *zhi*) carry inscriptions that provide textual evidence supporting the earliest accounts of Beijing's founding

4. The Jin Ding, a ritual tripod cauldron, is the biggest and heaviest bronze ritual vessel ever unearthed in Beijing

5. A bronze face ornament dating back to the Western Zhou Dynasty

Where Caravans Once Roamed: The Silk Road

By Mahnoor Makhdoom

XINHUA

The Qiuci Alley, a historic street in Kuqa, Aksu Prefecture in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on July 17

The historical significance of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China lies in its position along the Silk Road, the ancient network of routes that connected China to Central Asia and beyond. Traders, monks and envoys traversed deserts and mountain passes, bringing with them silk, jade, spices and manuscripts. That legacy remains visible in the region's museums, bazaars and culinary traditions, now carefully integrated into tourism experiences that blend preservation with accessibility.

The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum in the regional capital city of Urumqi brings this history to life. Its galleries chart a course through millennia, beginning with the renowned Tarim mummies, whose preserved features speak to human resilience in a stark landscape. Collections of Silk Road-era textiles, coins and manuscripts map the vast networks of exchange that linked East and West. Through interactive installations and clear narratives, the museum frames these artifacts within the broader story of Xinjiang's role as a conduit for commerce and cultural integration. The overall design emphasizes continuity, presenting heritage as a bridge between past encounters and present-day understanding.

Beyond Urumqi, Kashgar stands as a focal point for experiential cultural tourism. Located near the borders of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan, the city was historically a major hub on the Silk Road. Today, its ancient town has been partially restored to highlight traditional craftsmanship and trade practices. Narrow alleys lined with mud-brick houses lead to workshops where artisans shape copper, weave carpets and carve wood in view of passersby. Markets display embroidered caps, musical instruments and handwoven textiles, while public performances of music and dance animate courtyards and squares. The city thus offers both the atmosphere of historical preservation and the vitality of contemporary cultural expression.

Culinary traditions form another essential dimension of Xinjiang's tourism appeal. Local dishes such as handpulled noodles, skewered lamb, pilaf and freshly baked naan are widely available in markets and restaurants. Many establishments emphasize preparation methods, allowing visitors to watch chefs stretch dough into noodles or season meat with cumin and chili. Serving as more than just displays of technique, these culinary traditions bridge modern gastronomy and centuries of Silk Road exchange, highlighting food as a living cultural archive.

Cultural tourism in Xinjiang is supported by a network of museums, cultural centers and preservation initiatives. Smaller institutions often focus on local crafts and oral traditions, offering workshops on weaving, pottery or instrument-making. Hospitality providers contribute to the immersive experience by incorporating heritage elements into their design: Boutique hotels and guesthouses often feature traditional architecture and interiors inspired by regional motifs. Such efforts allow visitors to engage with living traditions rather than viewing culture solely as a relic of the past.

The region's approach to cultural tourism also reflects careful curation. Heritage sites and public performances are presented in ways that emphasize both historical depth and contemporary vitality. Restoration projects and urban planning initiatives ensure that visitors encounter a cohesive narrative, one that underscores Xinjiang's place in global history while ensuring its traditions remain accessible. The balance between authenticity and tourism-oriented presentation is a recurring theme, reflecting both the opportunities and responsibilities of cultural preservation.

As cultural tourism in Xinjiang evolves, it demonstrates the potential of heritage to serve as a source of learning and a driver of local development. Investments in infrastructure and preservation have opened up opportunities for communities to share their traditions with wider audiences. At the same time, the integration of music, crafts and cuisine ensures that tourism engages not only with monuments but also with living culture.

The result is an experience that is informative, immersive and sustainable. **BR**

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